

NATIONAL WOMEN'S LAW CENTER

On November 7th, the House of Representatives passed a health care reform bill which includes vitally important provisions for women and their families. Unfortunately, anti-choice forces used this major advance to subvert essential health care for women by taking away women's ability to purchase coverage for abortion care with their own funds in the health insurance exchanges, including the public option. These recent debates and critical decisions on health reform clearly illustrate why, back in October, the National Women's Law Center developed and launched a new public awareness campaign—[Being a Woman Is Not a Pre-Existing Condition](#)—to bring more women into the debate around health reform that works for women. This multi-faceted campaign came at a critical point in the health reform debates, and has received coverage on [CNN](#), the [CBS Evening News](#), the [U.S. News and World Report](#), [NPR](#) and on prominent websites like [msnbc.com](#), [Feministing](#), [the Nation](#), and [the Huffington Post](#).



Women concerned about health insurance reform pose for a photo in front of the U.S. Capitol where the National Women's Law Center announced its *Being A Woman Is Not A Pre-Existing Condition* campaign on Tuesday, Oct. 20, 2009 in Washington, DC.

There is much to be gained for women in terms of health reform, as the House bill demonstrates—we are now one step closer to ending higher premiums based on gender, denials by insurance companies for having had a Caesarean section or suffered domestic abuse under the guise that these were “pre-existing conditions,” and securing other major protections for women. However, the last-minute Stupak-Pitts amendment takes away women's ability to purchase coverage for abortion care with their own funds in the health insurance exchanges and public plan that the legislation created. It's a disturbing step backwards for reproductive rights in this country, and it is now being considered in the Senate.

In the months ahead, the Center will continue to speak out about the effect of health reform on all of women's needs, including their reproductive health needs. You can visit the *Being a Woman* website, www.awomanisnotapreexistingcondition.com, to learn more about the campaign.