

STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF RESOLUTION SUPPORTING
REINSTATEMENT OF PUBLIC FUNDING FOR ABORTIONS
March 17, 2015

My name is Nora Cusack. I have been a resident of Madison for over 45 years.

I am a long-time board member & treasurer of Women's Medical Fund. I'm here tonight to speak in support of the Council resolution supporting reinstatement of public funding for abortions.

For over 40 years, the volunteers of Women's Medical Fund have addressed one issue only, economic access to abortion. Last year we helped over 700 Wisconsin women & girls pay for abortion care. They asked us for help because they lack the money to completely pay for abortion care.

There are many barriers to access to abortion care Wisconsin: physical (including only 4 clinic providers in only 3 cities in the entire state), legal (many state laws restricting access, including the 24-hour wait), and economic.

This resolution addresses one of the main economic barriers to abortion access: state & federal funds cannot currently be used to pay for abortion care (except in very specific, rare circumstances).

The Hyde amendment stands in the way of equitable access to complete healthcare for all the residents of Madison & Wisconsin.

The majority of those Women's Medical Fund help receive their medical care through publically funded insurance. Without our assistance, they would not be able to access abortion care.

Women's Medical Fund should not need to exist. If all public & private health insurance paid for abortion we would not need to exist.

The amount of money a woman has or doesn't have should not prohibit her from having equitable access to a full range of reproductive options including abortion, a legal, safe medical procedure.

But the more than 5,000 Madison women of reproductive age currently enrolled in public insurance don't have access to abortion coverage because of the Hyde amendment.

Politicians shouldn't be allowed to deny a woman's health coverage just because she's poor.

Abortion funding restrictions such as the Hyde Amendment can be devastating to those who already face significant barriers to receiving high-quality health care, including low-income women, immigrant women, young women, & women of color—the women that Women's Medical Fund have helped for decades.

All Madison women deserve equal access to complete health care. All Madison women considering abortion need to be able to make a personal decision based on what's right for her situation.

You can take one step towards achieving that goal.

Madison should be a leader for reproductive health equity nationwide.

I ask that you vote in support of this resolution.

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