Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Bob Goodlatte
House Judiciary Committee
2138 Rayburn HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Goodlatte,

As we begin the second session of the 113th Congress, we write to express our disappointment that you have chosen H.R. 7, the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act, as the subject of the first full committee mark-up, at a time when more pressing bipartisan work is needed on an actual women's legislative agenda. According to the Shriver Report released just this week, one in three American women, 42 million women, plus 28 million children, either live in poverty or on the brink of it. As we urge Congress in 2014 to consider legislative action that would meaningfully address the economic insecurity currently facing millions of women and families, the Judiciary Committee's first action to mark up legislation that would harm women's access to reproductive health care is truly dispiriting.

We strongly oppose this sweeping anti-choice bill, which would deny premium tax credits to income-eligible men, women and families if insurance they obtain under the Affordable Care Act covers abortion except in the limited cases of rape, incest, and when a woman's life is in danger. It would also impose an unprecedented tax penalty on individuals and small employers who use their own money to pay for abortion or to purchase insurance that would cover abortion. The narrow exceptions to this bill allow for abortion coverage only for rape and incest or for conditions that put a woman in danger of death. This fails to address the need for access to abortion coverage for a woman whose health is seriously threatened by a pregnancy and may need an abortion to protect her health, but may not be in danger of imminent death. It is clear to us that H.R. 7's denial of abortion coverage to women will put some women's health at serious risk.

This bill goes far beyond current harmful legislative policy riders that restrict the use of federal funds for abortion by making these dangerous provisions permanent. In addition, under the Affordable Care Act health plans are already required to withhold federal funds from going toward abortion coverage in a Marketplace plan and require plans to use only private dollars for abortion coverage. The effect of these current limitations disproportionately and negatively affect low-income and minority women's ability to get the coverage they need.

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Before reporting out another piece of legislation to limit women's constitutionally protected right to make informed health care decisions about their own bodies with their own doctors, we respectfully ask you to ensure that there has been careful consideration of the impact this bill will have on women's health.

Sincerely,

Rep. Suzan DelBene

Rep. Judy Chu

Rep. Karen Bass

Rep. Zoe Lofgren

Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee