

115TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. RES. \_\_\_\_\_

Expressing the sense of the Congress in support of protecting patients' access to medically appropriate, evidence-based healthcare and information, and the ethical and professional obligations of healthcare professionals to provide that care and information.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. DEGETTE (for herself, Ms. LEE, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mrs. LOWEY, and Mr. CROWLEY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

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# RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Congress in support of protecting patients' access to medically appropriate, evidence-based healthcare and information, and the ethical and professional obligations of healthcare professionals to provide that care and information.

Whereas since its creation nearly half a century ago, the family planning program under title X of the Public Health Service Act has provided family planning and related preventive healthcare services to those most in need, and the program has enjoyed broad bipartisan support;

Whereas the title X program was created to assist in making comprehensive voluntary family planning services readily available to all persons desiring such services and to en-

able public and nonprofit private entities to plan and develop comprehensive programs that provide these family planning services;

Whereas the title X family planning program serves 4 million people each year, many of whom would otherwise be unable to access this healthcare;

Whereas the title X family planning program helps ensure that every person, regardless of where they live, how much money they make, their background, or whether or not they have health insurance, has access to basic, preventive reproductive healthcare, such as birth control, cancer screenings, STD testing and treatment, and well-woman exams;

Whereas title X serves a racially and ethnically diverse patient base: at least  $\frac{1}{3}$  of patients are people of color and 13 percent have limited proficiency in English;

Whereas for decades, people receiving services supported by the title X program have been given the full range of information they need to make fully informed decisions about their own pregnancy options, including access to safe and legal abortion;

Whereas efforts to stigmatize abortion care and providers of abortion care undermine patients' ability to make fully informed healthcare decisions;

Whereas the American Medical Association states in its Code of Medical Ethics that providers should "present relevant information accurately and sensitively, in keeping with the patient's preferences" and that "withholding information without the patient's knowledge or consent is ethically unacceptable";

Whereas the seminal 1982 Report of the President’s Commission for the Study of Ethical Problems in Medicine and in Biomedical and Behavioral Research states that “a physician is obliged to mention all alternative treatments, including those he or she does not provide or favor, so long as they are supported by respectable medical opinion”;

Whereas any policy that denies patients seeking care from title X-supported providers full and accurate information on and referral for healthcare services including abortion care violates basic medical ethics by forcing providers to withhold healthcare information from patients, and by denying patients’ basic right to informed consent;

Whereas healthcare providers participating in the title X family planning program must not have limitations on providing full and accurate information in order to communicate freely and exercise the provider’s medical judgment to provide the safest and most beneficial medical treatment to the individual patient; and

Whereas any policy that seeks to prevent healthcare providers participating in the title X family planning program from providing full and accurate information and referral for healthcare services threatens patient health, discourages honest conversation, and undermines the vital relationship between providers and patients, who rely upon their providers for complete and accurate information: Now, therefore, be it

1        *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2            (1) recognizes that patients’ health should al-  
3        ways come first, including that patients be able to  
4        rely on their medical providers to get medically accu-

1 rate and evidence-based information about their full  
2 range of healthcare options, including information  
3 about access to safe and legal abortion;

4 (2) urges the development and maintenance of  
5 trust between patients and healthcare providers by  
6 protecting providers' ability to give complete medical  
7 advice and information, in order to ensure no harm  
8 to patient health;

9 (3) encourages efforts to enhance patient qual-  
10 ity of care and access to confidential and safe care  
11 for all patients;

12 (4) supports efforts to promote the healthcare  
13 safety net;

14 (5) recognizes that any nationwide gag rule  
15 prohibiting information flow between patient and  
16 provider represents a radical departure from how  
17 healthcare has operated in the United States, which  
18 fundamentally erodes patients' right to informed  
19 consent, and providers' ability to provide appropriate  
20 and adequate healthcare and information; and

21 (6) opposes efforts seeking to limit access to  
22 and full information on reproductive healthcare op-  
23 tions in contradiction with congressional intent for  
24 the family planning program under title X of the  
25 Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 300 et seq.).