

The anti-choice majority in the Congress has voted more than 90 times, on a variety of bills, in an effort to broadly restrict abortion and reproductive choice. In the 105th Congress, the anti-choice majority has been successful in cutting back the right to choose on many fronts, including restricting contraceptive coverage for federal employees; limiting young women's access to abortion and family planning services; restricting U.S. funds for international family planning programs; and restricting access to abortion for military women, federal employees, and women in federal prison. The attempt to ban procedures and restrict access to abortion is an integral part of a long-term strategy by anti-choice members of Congress to take away a woman's right to choose, piece by piece.

I have consistently voted to preserve reproductive freedom for women. I voted against anti-choice legislation including an amendment to the Agriculture Appropriations bill which bans the use of FDA funding for the testing or approval of drugs that induce medical abortion, including RU-486; the so-called "Child Custody Protection Act"; the override of President Clinton's veto of the so-called "partial-birth" abortion ban; the "Hyde" amendment which made it explicit that managed care providers may not provide abortions with federal funds for Medicaid eligible recipients; among other restrictive measures. These provisions highlight how close this Congress is to broadly prohibiting the right to choose.

Amid this activity which restricts a woman's fundamental right to choose, the Congress has yet to advance any initiatives that address the causes of unintended pregnancy. Many of the legislators actively supporting the restrictive measures also oppose initiatives that will reduce the need for abortion, such as increased funding for and access to family planning services, comprehensive sexuality education, and more research and development for effective birth control.

As you may know I have and will continue to support legislation to improve women's health, and to protect women's access to abortion and reproductive health services. I am a co-sponsor of the Equity in Prescription Insurance and Contraception Coverage Act of 1997, H.R. 2174 which prohibits health plans from excluding or restricting benefits for outpatient contraceptive services if the plan provides benefits for other outpatient services provided by health care professionals. This Congress I have also supported Title X funding, the Lowey Contraceptive Coverage Amendment to strike the ban on privately funded abortions at overseas military facilities for servicewomen and military dependents, and international family planning measures.

As a strong supporter of Roe versus Wade, I believe that the difficult personal decision of abortion must be decided by a woman and her physician, and not Newt Gingrich and the United States Congress. Honest people have different opinions on this issue, but I remain a strong supporter of Roe V Wade and the constitutional protections it provides women over their health and their decision making about pregnancy without government interference.