

# CONCLUSION

“After 34 years of harmful—and, in some cases, devastating—discrimination against poor women, repealing the Hyde Amendment offers the United States a critical opportunity to restore women’s equality and make reproductive rights meaningful for all women irrespective of economic status.”

The investigation conducted by the **Center for Reproductive Rights** documents the ways in which poor women are affected by the Hyde Amendment’s discriminatory restrictions prohibiting Medicaid funding for abortion. The findings in this report suggest that if low-income women truly were able to exercise their reproductive rights, including the right to access healthcare services, women would secure an abortion as soon as they could after making their decision. By restricting access to abortion, the Hyde Amendment violates their fundamental human rights and denies their reproductive autonomy. Moreover, even within the limited parameters permitted by Hyde’s restrictions, eligible abortion claims are denied or rejected by states. The women interviewed for this report, and the clinic counselors, providers, and abortion Fund members who told their stories, offer insight into the struggles that poor women face in obtaining abortions, which they often seek in an effort to preserve and protect the health and well-being of their families.

In non-discrimination states where state funds cover abortion without the Hyde restrictions, individual state procedures for submitting and reviewing abortion claims often treat abortion differently than other medical procedures. Moreover, low Medicaid reimbursement rates and attenuated reimbursement times are among the most common factors reportedly leading abortion providers to limit acceptance of Medicaid or refuse it altogether. As a model for state Medicaid

coverage in the wake of Hyde’s repeal, these states need to reform and streamline their abortion payment procedures so that they are in accordance with state standards for submitting, reviewing, and processing all other medical claims. They also need to increase Medicaid reimbursement rates for abortion and related services.

After 34 years of harmful—and, in some cases, devastating—discrimination against poor women, repealing the Hyde Amendment offers the United States a critical opportunity to restore women’s equality and make reproductive rights meaningful for all women irrespective of economic status. Free from the restrictions of Hyde, women throughout the country would be empowered to make decisions regarding what is best for themselves and their families. The time for reform is now. Poor women have waited too long to be treated with dignity and justice.