



Gillibrand Press Conference on Stupak Amendment  
Dina Bakst Remarks, 11/16/09

Hello, my name is Dina Bakst, co-founder and co-president of A Better Balance, a NY-based legal advocacy organization fighting to create family-friendly law and policy.

While the House brought us one step closer to universal health coverage last week, the 11<sup>th</sup> hour Stupak amendment dealt an outrageous blow to women's reproductive rights.

The amendment makes it much more difficult- if not impossible- for private insurance companies that participate in the new insurance "exchange" to provide coverage for abortion related services.

President Obama has always said that people who want to keep their health insurance should be able to keep it. The reality is though under Stupak, millions of women are about to lose coverage they currently have and often need. In particular, many smaller employers who currently provide health insurance will likely opt into the Exchange for more affordable coverage. When that happens, women are going to lose the abortion coverage they currently have because of this law—no other reason.

Also, millions of other women left out of our current employer-based health care system- including women in lower-wage jobs and women who work part-time to balance their work and caregiving responsibilities- will also have to sacrifice coverage if they want to access our health care system.

No woman should be forced to trade her right to reproductive choice for passage of a health care bill. Yet as the recession deepens and



women increasingly take on the role of family breadwinner, more women will be pressured to do just that if this bill becomes law. This is not universal health care but a fundamental assault on women's reproductive health and freedom.

I commend Senator Gillibrand for her leadership on this important issue and her unwavering commitment to women's rights.