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The American Association of University Women supports the right of every woman to access safe, accessible, affordable, and comprehensive family planning and reproductive health care services. AAUW members have made the protection of reproductive rights a policy priority since 1977.

The lack of comprehensive support for reproductive health care has resulted in poor outcomes for many American women. Numerous schools provide abstinence-only sex education and contraception remains out of reach for many. For example, half of all pregnancies in the United States are unintended, with 4 in 10 of those pregnancies resulting in abortion.¹ Additionally, although teen birth rates have declined in recent years, nearly 7 percent of 15–19-year-olds become pregnant each year.²

The Supreme Court's 1973 ruling in *Roe v. Wade* legalized abortion and declared it a constitutionally protected right. Unfortunately, many American women are denied control over their reproductive lives due to increasing restrictions advanced by anti-choice lawmakers.

Developments in Women's Health

- The Affordable Care Act required that insurance companies cover contraception without co-pay or cost-sharing.³ However, this coverage was significantly weakened by the Supreme Court's June 2014 *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby* decision, which found that "closely held" corporations cannot be required to provide contraceptive coverage for their employees. The full impact of this decision won't be known for some time. Although Hobby Lobby challenged four forms of contraception, the court's decision was *not* limited to those forms of contraception only. Thus, companies can refuse to cover ALL forms of birth control if

they choose to do so. Several companies have already stepped forward to say they will revise their contraceptive coverage because of the court's ruling.⁴

- Beginning in 2013, brand-name emergency contraception (EC) was available over-the-counter for women and men of all ages. Generic EC will soon be available for purchase without prescription, although concerns about affordability linger.⁵
- In 2009, President Barack Obama overturned the global gag rule, also known as the Mexico City policy, and reinstated the United States' contributions to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). This change will allow millions of women to access critical reproductive health care.
- Also in 2009, the Obama administration proposed rescinding a "conscience clause" regulation that severely limited women's access to reproductive health and family planning services, including some common forms of birth control.⁶ However, this rescission has not been finalized.

Attacks on Reproductive Rights

- **Affordable Care Act Restrictions.** The law requires insurance companies providing abortion coverage to collect two payments from each enrollee: one for the portion of the premium covering abortion care, and one for the remainder of the premium. Additionally, members of Congress have