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**THE NEW YORK STATE BAR ASSOCIATIONS COMMITTEE ON WOMEN IN
THE LAW STRONGLY OPPOSES THE STUPAK AMENDMENT**

Proposed by Congressmen Bart Stupak (D-Michigan) and Joe Pitts (R-Pennsylvania), the Stupak amendment would prohibit federal dollars from being used to buy any health insurance policy that covers abortions not related to rape, incest or danger to the mother's life. The amendment would bar anyone receiving a federal subsidy for the purchase of health care and anyone using the proposed government run insurance plan from receiving elective abortions.

The "Hyde" amendment, passed in 1976, already limits access to abortions for women who rely on federally funded programs for healthcare. The Stupak amendment would expand this restriction to all women who participate in the public option. If a woman participates in the public option, this means she is using her own money to buy health care coverage run by the government. The end result of the Stupak amendment essentially means women will be forced to choose between affordable health coverage and their rights to comprehensive reproductive health care benefits.

One of the main charges for health care reform was that no one would lose health care benefits that he/she currently has. The Stupak amendment completely ignores this charge and denies women access to comprehensive reproductive health care. Further, there was the hope that national health care reform would correct the inequities of the Hyde amendment, not further exacerbate the problem.

While the Stupak Amendment would apply only to the federal program or to people using federal funding for health care coverage, this amendment sets a dangerous precedent for other health care plans. If the public health care option does not cover all reproductive health care, then other private health care plans may start to limit coverage as well. *See Sara Rosenbaum, et al., George Washington University School of Public Health, An Analysis of the Implications of the Stupak/Pitts Amendment for Coverage of Medically Indicated Abortions* (November 16, 2009), http://www.gwumc.edu/sphhs/departments/healthpolicy/dhp_publications/pub_uploads/dhpPublication_FED314C4-5056-9D20-3DBE77EF6ABF0FED.pdf. This amendment creates a slippery slope that will ultimately impair women's access to reproductive health care.

The New York State Bar Association Committee on Women in the Law strongly opposes this amendment and encourages every member to contact his/her Congressperson and Senator to tell them that the Stupak Amendment is unfair and should not be included in the final health care legislation.