

I am Joan Schrammeck with Cedar River Clinics. Cedar River Clinics provides abortion, birth control and women's health care in Renton, Tacoma, and Yakima. We specialize in abortion care, and provide about 5000 women annually with abortion services.

Did you know that about 85% of American women get pregnant and give birth? And about 33% of American women get pregnant and have an abortion? That over 60% of the women who have abortions are already mothers. We are the same women making important decisions at different times depending on the circumstances of our lives and looking out for the futures of our families.

I am one of those women.

Unfortunately Bart Stupak in the House, and Ben Nelson in the Senate – think they know better than American women. They would use health care reform to attempt to ban abortion coverage in any insurance plan, even if paid for with private funds. Remember **one in three** women have abortions in their lifetimes. Americans do not want health reform to be a means for taking away coverage that people have today. It seems Stupak and Nelson care more about banning insurance coverage for abortion, than they do about the 45,000 people who die each year because they don't have insurance at all.

We want thank Rick Larsen for voting NO on the Stupak amendment in the House where it passed, and Senators Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell for voting NO on the Nelson Amendment in the Senate, where it was defeated. **But it's not over yet.** We've got to keep pressure on all members of the House and Senate that they cannot allow Ben Nelson, Bart Stupak, and the Catholic Bishops to de-rail health reform.

There are some really good things in the health reform bills. I want to share a few with you.

- First, there is a ban on gender rating – Gender rating is the practice of charging females more than males in health insurance – and it would have to stop.
- Another good thing is that Young people can stay on the parents' insurance up to age 27, which is a good way to expand insurance coverage among young people.
- Third, the Menendez Amendment which is likely to be voted in the Senate on this weekend – it would give states the option to remove the 5 year waiting period for LEGAL immigrants to obtain Medicaid. The vast majority of people affected by this policy are low-income women who are in the United States legally, paying taxes, raising children, and under reform, would not have any coverage outside of emergency rooms, unless the Menendez Amendment passes.

And so, we're here today to send a message to Washington DC:

Keep stopping Stupak & Nelson – do not let a handful anti-abortion politicians defeat health reform for all.

Vote YES on the Menendez Amendment.

And, it's not reform unless it includes a public option.

And, we must recognize, when or if any of these bills pass, our work is not done. This legislation will not fulfill the promise of health care for ALL. It's time to stop insurance company lobbyists, and the pharmaceutical lobbyists, and the Conference of Catholic Bishops from deciding what is best for all.

We still believe single-payer Medicare-for-all is the best solution!

Health care should be available for every single person who needs it, regardless of their employment or marriage, or health status, or immigration status, or economic status.

We believe Health care is a fundamental human right – and a human right that is not yet recognized here in the United States. **And, so we have more work to do.**

Thank you for coming out in the cold and being here today!

Health Care for the Holidays Rally – 1 pm - Dec 12, 2009
Snohomish County Court House Courthouse Amphitheatre
3000 Rockefeller Ave, Everett, WA 98201
sponsored by Organizing for America (OFA)

Joan Schrammeck is the Development & Communications Director for three community health centers in Washington State that provide reproductive health care for women. The health centers are called Cedar River Clinics and are located in Renton, Tacoma and Yakima.