

November 10, 2014

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairwoman Mikulski:

We, the undersigned organizations, representing diverse constituencies throughout Maryland, write to express our strong support for the provision in both the Senate and House FY 2015 State and Foreign Operations (SFOPS) appropriations bills (S. 2499/ H.R. 5013) that would ensure that Peace Corps volunteers have the same abortion coverage as other federal workers who rely on the government for their health insurance. We are grateful for your longstanding commitment to women's reproductive health and ask that you continue to demonstrate that support by ensuring that this provision is included in the final FY 2015 funding legislation.

Peace Corps volunteers, who give their time and energy to help communities in developing countries, should receive nothing short of comprehensive insurance coverage from our government. But, today, that is not the case. Unlike other women in federal service, the women who make up more than 60% of all Peace Corps volunteers have no abortion coverage even in cases of rape, incest or life endangerment. This policy unfairly singles out the thousands of women who serve our country in promoting peace and development around the world.

Maryland residents have a proud tradition of service in the Peace Corps. Since the Peace Corps was established in 1961, over 5,700 Marylanders have volunteered and 199 are currently serving our country abroad. We urge you to support our Maryland volunteers and all Peace Corps volunteers, and stand by our state's long history of protecting women's reproductive health by making this issue a priority.

Please ensure that this important coverage is included in the final spending bill so that Peace Corps volunteers finally receive the same basic reproductive health care coverage as other women in federal service.

Thank you again for your leadership on behalf of Maryland women.

Sincerely,

American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland
Center of Applied Feminism, University of Baltimore
Maryland NOW
Maryland Women's Coalition for Health Care Reform
Maryland Women's Law Center
Planned Parenthood of Maryland
Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington
NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland
Younger Women's Task Force, Baltimore Chapter