

## SisterSong Action Alert

### LOBBY DAY – January 20, 2010

Have you had your say on Health Care Reform yet? Well, next week could be your very LAST CHANCE to lobby for the best-combined health care reform bill possible. On January 19 SisterSong is taking **10 advocates** in a Southern Delegation of advocates from Arkansas (AR), North Carolina (NC), South Carolina (SC), Tennessee (TN), and Texas (TX) to Washington, DC for what could be our last lobbying effort. We want the most comprehensive health care reform possible and the key to securing this lies in the South.

#### **WE NEED YOUR HELP. PLEASE RSVP NOW!**

*SisterSong believes that a full range of comprehensive services, including coverage for family planning, midwifery services, abortions, prenatal and postnatal care and preventive services should be afforded to all women. Currently, women of color, particularly in the South, have difficulty accessing these services, like abortion services, for a number of reasons including costs. Under the Hyde Amendment, federal funds cannot be used to access abortion services; subsequently many poor women are denied their full range of reproductive health options when faced with an unplanned pregnancy. As we move toward health care insurance reform, it is important to note that communities of color are disproportionately uninsured and underinsured and have worse health outcomes relative to white women, particularly in the South. Black women and Latinas make up more than 30% of the uninsured in states like Arkansas, Texas, Tennessee, North Carolina, and South Carolina. And those who have insurance often have higher premiums than their white counterparts. These factors contribute to health care disparities as well as the overall quality of life for many women of color and their families.*

**Right now, both the House and Senate versions of the Health care bill include dangerous and unacceptable restrictions on abortion coverage and limits to affordable coverage for women and poor people.** In the midst of negotiations and closed door deals, the lives of poor women, women of color, and their families hang in the balance. As a member of our Southern Delegation you can lobby your elected officials on critical provisions that affect all women, but especially women of color. Elected officials from the southern states of AR, NC, SC, TN, and TX are critical votes that can make the difference in this final bill, but they need to hear from YOU!

**Please join us in DC on January 20, 2010.**

**While the House bill is better in several ways; the House and Senate bills restrict abortion coverage beyond the current law.** The House Bill contains the unacceptable Stupak-Pitts abortion coverage ban, **which makes abortion coverage available only as a rider on the basic insurance policy.** This lags only slightly

behind the Nelson abortion restriction, ***which allows states to prohibit abortion; coverage requires that insurers keep abortion funds and other revenues separate; and, a 2-separate premium payments system for women.*** Raising Women's Voices reports that even pro-choice legislators don't understand how these measures hurt women.

**You can explain what's wrong with these restrictions!**

If we don't act immediately, women could face significant barriers to accessing abortion care in the new health system.

**TAKE ACTION NOW!**

There are several ways that SisterSong is fighting for the human right to health care but we need your help. The constituencies from the South must stand up for the lives of women of color and their communities.

**What you can do to help:**

- **Write a letter to the editor or create an opinion/editorial piece.**  
Make a difference where you are by writing to the local paper and sharing your lived experiences regarding health care. SisterSong has sample letters and writing tips that can help you effectively tell your story for the local community.
- **Send handwritten letters to your Representatives and Senators.**  
Nothing is like writing to your legislator and telling them in your own handwriting why health care reform matters.
- **Join the Cartoon Postcard Campaign.** Raising Women's Voices, a national partner of SisterSong, recently designed a postcard illustrating the absurdity of the 2-check provision of the Nelson Amendment. Download this cartoon and send it your legislators.  
<http://rs6.net/tn.jsp?t=asyehgdab.0.0.7gikhabab.0&p=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.raisingwomensvoices.net%2Fsend-your-own-postcard%2F&id=preview>  
Show them graphically how the two-check scheme could violate women's medical privacy.

Whether you are home or in DC, you can join this last push for comprehensive health care reform. Please contact Heidi at SisterSong for more information at 404-756-2680 or email at [heidi@sistersong.net](mailto:heidi@sistersong.net). Email us a copy of your letters at [serena@sistersong.net](mailto:serena@sistersong.net).