Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

December 19, 2023

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
Vice Chair
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Murray and Vice Chair Collins:

We write to urge you to keep the FY24 appropriations bills free of any new poison pill policy riders. Partisan, discriminatory, and harmful policy riders have no place in appropriations bills. The Senate has had tremendous success both passing bipartisan bills in committee and on the Senate floor because these bills are free of new poison pill riders. Unfortunately, the House appropriations bills are filled with new highly partisan provisions, including anti-abortion and anti-LGBTQ+ riders, that should be removed from any final appropriations bills.

Our country is facing a reproductive health care crisis, one that has been accelerated by the Supreme Court's extremist decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*. As of November 7, 2023, 14 states are enforcing abortion bans at any point in pregnancy and seven states have imposed abortion bans with limits that range from six to 18 weeks. These bans leave 1 in 3 women, as well as transgender and nonbinary people, without access to abortion and disproportionately impact people of color, people with disabilities, young people, people living in rural areas, and people with low incomes.

Yet in the midst of this crisis, House Republicans have proposed several new anti-abortion policy riders. These riders include a provision to force back in place medically unnecessary restrictions on medication abortion, a measure to stop the implementation of the Biden administration's executive orders to protect access to abortion care, and a measure that would jeopardize access to essential postgraduate medical training in abortion care. If adopted, these provisions would seriously undermine pregnant people's ability to make decisions about their bodies and providers' ability to provide necessary care.

At the same time, House Republicans have used the appropriations process to push extremist anti-LGBTQ+ measures, which threaten to disrupt the lives and fundamental dignity of the LGBTQ+ community. Anti-LGBTQ+ legislation is already on the rise; in 2023 alone, more than 575 anti-LGBTQ+ bills have been introduced across 41 state legislatures, and more than 80 of those bills have been signed into law.

Against this backdrop, House Republicans have introduced more than 50 anti-LGBTQ+ provisions across all 12 appropriations bills. These provisions include those allowing the government to discriminate against married same-sex couples as well as language to prevent the administration from enforcing laws to protect LGBTQ+ people from discrimination. Seven of the House's twelve appropriations bills also contain dangerous riders that ban access to gender-affirming care, which would deprive transgender people of medically necessary and often life-saving healthcare.

Controversial poison pill provisions like those riddled throughout the House appropriations bills will severely undermine Congress' ability to push forward must-pass funding measures to keep the government open and working for the American people.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

Cory A. Booker
United States Senator

Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

Ron Wyden
United States Senator

Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

Laphonza Butler
United States Senator

Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

John Hickenlooper
United States Senator

Alex Padilla
United States Senator

Robert Menendez
United States Senator

Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator

Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

Jack Reed
United States Senator

Tina Smith
United States Senator

Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator

Brian Schatz
United States Senator

Peter Welch
United States Senator

Ben Ray Luján
United States Senator

Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator

Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator

Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator

Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator

Mark Kelly
United States Senator

Bernard Sanders
United States Senator

Maria Cantwell
United States Senator

Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator

Martin Heinrich
United States Senator

Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator

Gary C. Peters
United States Senator

Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator

Raphael Warnock
United States Senator

John Fetterman
United States Senator

Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator

Jacky Rosen
United States Senator

Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator

Tim Kaine
United States Senator

Mark R. Warner
United States Senator

Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator

CC:

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer, Senate Majority Leader
The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Senate Minority Leader