



Politicians debate new birth control plans for women

BY LUNCH OUTING
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Congress scrambled this week to come up with a new federal birth control provision after facing criticism from thousands of women apparently unsatisfied by suggestions that they hold aspirin tablets between their knees, abstain until death or simply close their eyes and wish really hard not to get pregnant.

In an emergency hearing in the House, representatives listened to testimony from a diverse panel of women's health experts, including everyone from a rich 65-year-old man to a rich 54-year-old man to rich 73-year-old man. The politicians then debated how to best meet the needs of America's women.

"We hear women saying they want coverage for birth control," explained Rep. Darrell Issa (R-Calif.), who led the panel discussion. "But taxpayers shouldn't have to pay for anything they don't believe in, like women's health. So we're here today to offer some alternatives."

Issa then laid out his proposal to mandate insurance companies to cover birth control, but allow them to distribute packs of pills that are wired to deliver a small electric shock every time they are opened. Over time, Issa explained, women will develop a negative association with using the pills, and they will form a deep-seated aversion to basic preventative care without really understanding why.

"We can't trust women to make the right decisions for themselves — that would obviously be ridiculous," Issa said. "But with a little basic behavioral conditioning, we can train them out of wanting things, like lab monkeys. Everybody wins."

Rep. Fred Upton (R-Mich.) objected to Issa's suggestion, arguing that it's cruel and unusual to force insurance executives to go through the extra paperwork such a system would require. Instead, he offered, women's clothing could be fitted with wireless sensors that track the clothing's position and communicate it via satellite network back to Congress, who could automatically deduct ten dollars from the women's bank accounts every time they got frisky.

"That way we could recoup the cost of any birth control we had to provide," Upton explained. "I mean, I think we would; I haven't really done the math, honestly. But I think it's crucial for Congress to maintain oversight of women's pants."

House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio), meanwhile, recommended that women who don't want to get pregnant simply turn on the television and watch a constant stream of congressional proceedings on C-SPAN. "A few minutes of that will pretty much sap your will to live," Boehner said, "and you'll forget all about wanting to roll in the hay."

"Another option is getting women to become more active outside of hanging out with men," said another white, pasty male on the panel. "I think of some of the great programs that came out of the 1930s in Europe." (See photo above.)

No decision has yet been reached, and 18 further hearings are scheduled, preempting meetings on energy, education and national security.

Meanwhile, Republican presidential candidates on the campaign trail have joined in the discussion. During a campaign stop at a Waffle House in Beaver Dam, Wisc., presidential hopeful Newt Gingrich announced a new proposal to simply send all women away to live on the moon.

"By the end of my second term," Gingrich said, "all American women will live in a permanent colony on the moon. This way, taxpayers won't have to worry about paying for anyone's birth control — it's difficult for women to get pregnant when there's very little gravity and no men for 250,000 miles."

When a nine-year-old at the event pointed out that rocket fuel, long-term food rations for 150 million women, and the large-scale terraforming necessary to sustain life

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outside Earth's atmosphere would probably cost significantly more than basic women's health services, Gingrich said that was beside the point. "It's more the principle of the thing," he said.

"Besides," Gingrich added, "without any women here on Earth, we'll no longer have to pretend we actually care about their needs."

In a rare showing of agreement between opposing candidates, Mitt Romney — campaigning the same day at a yacht club in Sheboygan — applauded Gingrich's plan. "I like being able to fire people," Romney said, "especially in rockets to the moon."