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OPINION

Our Health Should Never Be Disregarded

Pain feels worse with this Congress and White House

BY LESLIE WATSON MALACHI

My nieces, who range in age from 17 to 25, grew up in a very different world from the one I knew coming of age in the 1970s

For their entire lives, abortion has been legal. And Planned Parenthood and other women's clinics have served as a steadfast source of health care.

Although access to reproductive care is still too often contingent on income or zip code, until recently it felt like our fundamental rights were, by and large, standing on solid ground.

It no longer feels that way — and that makes me truly afraid for

my nieces.

Politicians putting women's health on the chopping block isn't new. But the pain feels so much sharper with this Congress and



White House chipping away at constitutional rights and slashing funding for women's health. The burden will fall heaviest on women who can least afford cuts, but who will be forced to pay the heaviest price.

These attacks, which are part of the larger war on women, have already begun in the few short months since Trump took office.

Not surprisingly, in April President Trump signed legislation to undo a rule protecting the Title X family planning program. I wonder if he knew or cared that Title X is a vital safety net program that has supported access to affordable health care — including cancer screenings, well-woman exams,

and birth control — for millions of low-income people.

Does he know or care that about one in five Title X patients are African American, nearly one third are Latino, and around half are white? That the vast majority of people who use Title X make do on incomes less than 150 percent of the federal poverty line?

The sad reality is most of those served by this program simply can't afford care on their own, and this administration doesn't care.

This newly signed repeal lets states prevent Title X patients from accessing critical health services if their local health care provider also provides abortions, like Planned Parenthood. This should be seen for what it is: a shameful move that puts partisan politics above the health of low-income women and their families — including many who voted for this administration.

Despite recent failed attempts to repeal the Affordable Care Act,

extreme politicians remain committed unnecessarily to "defunding" Planned Parenthood. Why unnecessary? Because since 1976, Congress has had a rule — the Hyde Amendment — that prevents federal dollars from paying for abortions.

That means Planned Parenthood already can't spend tax dollars on abortions. So when politicians talk about "defunding" it, what they're really talking about is preventing women who rely on programs like Medicaid from accessing other services — like pre-natal care — through Planned Parenthood.

If Congress were to successfully shut down Planned Parenthood health centers, a breathtaking 2.5 million people, both men and women, would no longer have access to cancer screenings, birth control, and other critical services each year — likely causing a national health care crisis.

Whether she lives in the city, a

suburb, or in a rural community, a low-income woman would find herself with a personal health care crisis like no other in recent times. For many, there are simply no other affordable options to turn to if their local Planned Parenthood center shuts down.

Our right to safe, affordable, accessible health care is on the chopping block. As the attacks ramp up, women of all ages, ethnicities, and racial identities should be talking together, sharing together, and demanding together our right to be healthy.

Our health — and that of our families and communities — should never be disregarded for the sake of political expediency. For my nieces' generation — and for women across the country — the price is just too high.

Leslie Watson Malachi is the director of African American Religious Affairs at People For the American Way. Distributed by OtherWords.org.

Our Public Postal Service Delivers, Literally

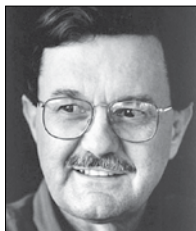
There's a good reason for the high grade

BY JIM HIGHTOWER

A half-dollar hardly counts as money these days — it won't even buy a cup of coffee. But psssst... here's an amazing half-dollar bargain for you: A first-class postage stamp.

For 50 cents, you get the stamp,

3 cents in change, and America's phenomenal network of post office workers and letter carriers, who will deliver your missive into any of the 43,000 zip codes of this vast country.



Our public Postal Service literally delivers, and many of our post offices serve as treasured community centers — two reasons that the U.S. mail service consistently ranks highest of all federal agencies in public

support.

So, naturally, it must be decimated and ultimately eliminated.

That's what passes for logic in the back rooms of Congress and in the boardrooms of predatory corporations that want to take control our mail for their profit.

They keep demonizing anything public — especially any public service that actually works and is popular — because the corporate powers and the congress critters they buy in bulk ultimately intend to privatize all of the

people's government. To advance their plutocratic vision, they're out to tarnish the Postal Service as a massive, money-sucking, dying, bureaucratic behemoth.

But here are a few facts they don't want you to realize.

One, this public agency provides affordable mail service to all, in poor communities as well as rich. Two, it does this without a dime of taxpayer money, financing its entire operation with the sale of stamps and services. And three, it provides hundreds of thousands

of solid middle-class jobs spread throughout every zip code.

To help keep this public jewel out of the hands of a few greed-headed, price-gouging, low-wage, tax-dodging corporations, support "A Grand Alliance To Save Our Public Post Offices." Find it at www.AGrandAlliance.org.

OtherWords columnist Jim Hightower is a radio commentator, writer, and public speaker. He's also the editor of the populist newsletter, The Hightower Low-down.

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