

Take Action for Reproductive Freedom!

- **Educate** yourself and other young people about the Hyde Amendment and other attacks on women
- **Organize** young people around you to get involved
- **Pressure politicians** to repeal the Hyde Amendment and other harmful programs, and start new public programs (or fund existing ones) that promote women's reproductive autonomy.
- **Raise money** for local funds that help poor women get abortions and for grassroots organizations of poor women, young women, and women of color pushing for reproductive justice.

Learn More About YDS

YDS is the youth section of the Democratic Socialists of America. With members and local chapters across the US, YDS works to transform our society - on the job, in the streets, in the classroom. We are a broad, diverse network of young activists who share a vision of a more humane future, and we organize and struggle every day to redistribute power. Building democratic socialism is a long struggle, and we take it one step at a time.

Socialism is one of the most misused words in the American political vocabulary. Contrary to misrepresentations by both conservatives and liberals, socialism is not about breadlines or police states. Rather, we fight for the extension of democracy into all aspects of social life, including the economy. We are proud of the relative democratic freedoms enjoyed by US citizens. But without economic democracy, this political liberty is weak and incomplete.

We believe that people must have a voice in the economic decisions which affect their lives. Democratic socialism also means fighting non-economic inequalities of power- including racism, sexism and heterosexism in all their forms. A radical democracy is the only way to ensure a world in which class, race, gender and citizenship status do not decide our futures.

Contact YDS at www.ydsusa.org, yds@dsausa.org or (212) 727-8610 to get involved or learn more.



Choice is Not Enough: We Demand Reproductive Freedom

The mainstream feminist movement advocates for women's legal right to choose abortion, but while we believe that women's autonomy over pregnancy and childbearing is crucial to women's status as being equal to men, rather than human incubators, this legalistic perspective abandons many poor women, young women, women of color and others who face structural barriers to exercising true control over their sexual and reproductive lives.

The Young Democratic Socialists believe that full reproductive freedom, the right to control one's own health, sexuality and fertility with dignity, not discrimination, is a human right. Until all women enjoy these full rights, everyone will suffer from living in an unjust society.

Real Solutions to Collective Problems

In the U.S. today, women must often struggle to meet minimal standards of a fulfilling life, health and security. The same people and institutions that push "family values" as an argument to end abortion and curtail sexual freedom often support the privatization of care in our society. In other words, rather than support a universal child care system and universal health care, they call for increased reliance on the private, heterosexual family unit and more "personal responsibility."

The right-wing often succeeds in blaming individuals for problems that many of us face, instead of our unjust economic and social systems that benefit a few rather than everyone. Many people then believe that we need individual solutions to these problems.

Unfortunately, these individual solutions have turned out to create even more problems, such as low-quality health coverage for many women and an unfair distribution of that care, which often leave women of color, poor women and young women lower rates of health care access than white or middle class women. Instead of working together as a group to find a solution, we allow ourselves to be divided.

To complicate things further, the legacy of colonization and slavery in the U.S. results in racist practices and institutions, not just individuals, that are resistant to change. For example, while instances of widespread, involuntary sterilization of Native American, black and latina women are rare today, groups that target poor women of color for sterilization still operate. Many poor women of color are still forced to choose between narrow “choices” about their fertility, like having access only to long-acting birth control methods that require a visit to the doctor to stop, whereas many middle class white women find it easier to get the pill or other birth control methods that they can control themselves, in the privacy of their own homes.

These intersecting forms of oppression, patriarchy, capitalism and racism require an integrated response from all of us. Until we have won democratically controlled, publicly funded programs that provide fair and universal care, and those programs consciously work against unfair outcomes based on race and class as well as gender, we will be living in an unjust system.

Barriers to Reproductive Freedom: Some Institutional Examples

- Parental Notification and Consent Laws which force minors to inform parents of their wish for an abortion
- Welfare/TANF “family caps” which punish poor women with children by cutting off assistance no matter the family size
- Prohibitions on federal funding for abortions for women in the military, in federal prisons, on disability insurance, in the Peace Corps and who receive health care from Indian Health Services
- Abstinence-only (unscientific and religion-based) sex education in public schools
- Immigration policy which promotes the rapid deportation of undocumented immigrant women workers after raids, often separating them from their children even if they are the only caregiver
- Prohibitions against non-parents or guardians transporting minors across state lines to access abortion
- Attacks on LGBTQ people’s rights to benefits like health care
- The federal Hyde Amendment, which restricts Medicaid funding for abortions

30 Years is Enough! Campaign to Repeal the Hyde Amendment

The federal government denies many poor women, women of color, young women and immigrant woman the ability to make their own decisions about pregnancy and childbearing through the annual reauthorization of the Hyde Amendment, which is a provision in the federal Medicaid budget that restricts Medicaid funding for abortions. 6 million women depend on Medicaid for their health care.

Paying for an abortion can be a significant financial burden: the average cost of a first-trimester abortion in the U.S. is \$468, and later term abortions can cost up to \$1,179, more than a poverty-level family lives on in a month. Add to these costs the need for travel in rural areas or states with few abortion providers, and hotel costs in states with mandatory waiting periods.

Women in the situation of wanting or needing an abortion forgo food, risk eviction and pawn their possessions to try to raise money for the procedure. Some are forced to continue the pregnancy, often abandon their education and stay trapped in poverty. Over 60% of abortions in the U.S. are among women with one or more children. Between 18—35% of the Medicaid-eligible women who would have had abortions if public funding was available, instead carry unplanned pregnancies to term.

The Hyde—30 Years is Enough! Campaign calls for full public funding of abortion, culturally competent family planning services and support for low-income women to care for their children with dignity. The Young Democratic Socialists are proud supporters of the campaign.

In Honor of Rosie Jimenez: Hyde’s First Known Victim

Rosie Jimenez was the first woman to die from a “back alley” abortion after the Hyde Amendment was passed. A latina college student, she died on October 3, 1977, only weeks after the Hyde statute went into effect.

