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For Immediate Release

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**WOMEN OF COLOR UNITED FOR HEALTH REFORM RESPOND TO MIXED HOUSE VICTORY; LOOK TO SENATE TO STAND FOR WOMEN'S HEALTH**

On Saturday, November 7, 2009, the House of Representatives passed the Affordable Health Care for America Act (H.R. 3962). We commend the House for passing reform that will dramatically increase access to health care services and includes major gains for women of color. With the House reform measure, insurance companies would no longer be able to discriminate based on gender or health status, steps would be taken to eliminate health care inequalities and disparities, Medicaid would be expanded to cover individuals at 150 percent of the federal poverty level, preventative care would be prioritized, and access to community-based, culturally competent care would be increased.

We are troubled, however, that this bill – while it will greatly improve health coverage and access for our communities – sacrificed key concerns of women and immigrant communities. The House severely undermined the reproductive health and rights of women by voting for the Stupak/Pitts amendment, which dealt a devastating blow to abortion access. The Stupak/Pitts amendment violates a principle tenant of the President's health reform agenda: no woman should be worse off as a result of health reform. All women should be able to have a health insurance plan that covers the full range of medical services, including comprehensive reproductive health care.

While House leadership stood strong against anti-immigrant proposals, the House bill would regrettably continue the mandatory five-year ban for legal immigrants to access health services through Medicare, Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program.

Women of Color United for Health Reform turns now to the Senate and the White House to stand firm and protect the rights and health of all people as we progress towards passing health reform that works for women and communities of color.

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