



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF TEXAS

TESTIMONY
House Insurance Committee
HB 636 (Zerwas)
March 1, 2011

The LWV is a non-partisan, political organization with 32 local Leagues and 2500 members across the state. Women's health and access to safe, legal abortions is very important to our members. **LWV opposes HB 636.** This proposed law would render virtually meaningless the Roe v. Wade decision that granted the right to choose an abortion. The law would prohibit qualified health plans under the Patient Protection and Affordable Health Care Act from providing coverage for an abortion, even under a private insurance policy which NO tax dollars were used to purchase. HB 636 would make abortions unaffordable for many women in Texas.

Currently, nationwide, the majority of private insurance plans cover abortion care.* Singling out abortion for exclusion from coverage in the health insurance exchanges set up under HB 636 is both discriminatory and harmful to women's health. This legislative attempt to restrict abortion coverage would take away benefits that most have today. The bill would be especially harmful to low-income women who are expected to be the main group needing to buy insurance from health exchanges. It will be difficult, if not impossible, for them to purchase insurance coverage. Instead, they will likely find themselves turning to cheap and unsafe "clinics" and providers.

LWV urges this Committee to vote against HB 636 and thanks you for this opportunity to express our views.

* A 2003 Guttmacher Institute survey found that 86.5 percent of employment-based health plans cover medical abortions and 86.9 percent of employment-based health plans cover surgical abortion.