The American Association of University Women supports the right of every woman to access safe, accessible, affordable, and comprehensive family planning and reproductive health services. AAUW members have made the protection of reproductive rights a policy priority since 1977.

Beginning in August 2012, several women’s preventive health care services (including birth control) became available without co-pay or cost-sharing. The coverage of contraception, which is part of the Affordable Care Act of 2010, didn’t happen without controversy. Despite an accommodation exempting religiously-affiliated employers from directly paying for contraception, lawmakers continue to attempt to take this benefit away from women.

One proposal, voted on by the Senate as recently as March 2013, would have allowed employers and insurance companies to deny coverage for ANY essential health service they objected to on the basis of personal religious beliefs or moral convictions.¹

Several lawsuits have been filed against the contraceptive coverage requirement. AAUW has signed onto to several amicus briefs defending the coverage requirement. Many experts expect the Supreme Court to hear a challenge to this coverage in an upcoming term.²

**Benefits of Contraception**

Birth control is a vital part of women’s preventive health care. Access without co-pay or cost-sharing will help women control, track, and better manage their lifelong health. The lack of comprehensive support for reproductive health has resulted in dire outcomes for some American women, with half of all pregnancies in the United States unintended.

Over 98 percent of American women use contraception at some point in their life.³ Yet the cost remains a burden for many women, preventing them from enjoying the benefits of these services.

AAUW believes politicians should not insert themselves into the reproductive health care decision-making process, which is a basic element of women’s overall health. Every woman should have the ability to make her own informed choices regarding her reproductive life within the dictates of her own moral and religious beliefs and without governmental interference.

**Additional Resources**

**AAUW’s Position on Health Care.**
American Association of University Women

**Comments on New Affordable Care Act Contraceptive Coverage Requirement.**
American Association of University Women

**Preventive Services for Women.**
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
www.healthcare.gov/law/resources/regulations/womensprevention.html

AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, and research. Since 1881, AAUW has been one of the nation’s leading voices promoting education and equity for women and girls. AAUW has a nationwide network of more than 165,000 members and supporters across the United States, as well as 1,000 local branches and 800 college and university partners.