

FACT SHEET

# The “Peace Corps Equity Act” Corrects a Health Care Coverage Inequity for Peace Corps Volunteers

April 2013

*Peace Corps volunteers are provided NO coverage for abortion, **even in the case of life endangerment to the woman or if she is a survivor of rape or incest.** The Peace Corps Equity Act of 2013, sponsored by Senator Lautenberg, would ensure that Peace Corps Volunteers are treated the same as other women with federal health insurance.*

## It is Unfair that Peace Corps Volunteers Do Not Have the Same Coverage As Others Who Have Federal Health Care Coverage

Since 1961, Peace Corps Volunteers have provided an invaluable service to our country and the countries with which we partner to foster peace and development. Despite their invaluable service, Peace Corps Volunteers are denied any coverage for abortion, even in the case of life endangerment to the woman or if she is a survivor of rape or incest. Other women who receive health care coverage through the federal government, even the federal employees who work for the Peace Corps, do get coverage of abortion in the cases of rape, incest and life endangerment. Although any restriction on coverage of abortion harms women's health, the disparity in coverage for Peace Corps Volunteers is unconscionable and should be fixed immediately.

## Peace Corps Volunteers Must Be Provided Coverage for Life-Saving Abortion Services

For Peace Corps Volunteers, current law bars coverage of abortion in all circumstances. This means even when an abortion is necessary to save a woman's life, she is denied the reproductive health care coverage she needs. This extreme provision means that Peace Corps Volunteers may have to forgo life-saving medical treatment.

## It is Wrong that Peace Corps Volunteers Who Are Survivors of Sexual Violence Do Not Have Coverage for Abortion Services

More than 60% of the more than 8,000 Peace Corps volunteers are women. Peace Corps Volunteers face inherent risks to their safety and security by virtue of living and working abroad. Women should never have to face the tragedy of sexual violence, but if they do, they should be able to access comprehensive health care and support services. Yet, the current ban on coverage means that Volunteers who are survivors of rape or incest will not receive any coverage for abortion care. The failure to provide coverage even in these extreme circumstances is unconscionable.