

## YWCA USA Policy Update

January 20, 2017

Dear YWCA Leaders,

This is the fifth in a series of updates that YWCA USA's Public Policy & Advocacy team has prepared for YWCA leaders. This update provides a summary of what has occurred in Congress since the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress was gaveled in on January 3, 2017, including the passage of legislation of note, updates on confirmation hearings for President Trump's cabinet nominees and the movement on repealing the Affordable Care Act (ACA). We have also provided links to resources for additional information.

The weeks and months ahead promise to be challenging ones. Please keep updated on our advocacy regarding Cabinet nominations through the [Transition 2017](#) intranet page, which includes links to action alerts, letters, and resource materials. Learn more about the [2017 – 2018 Public Policy Priorities](#) and explore [new fact sheets](#) to support your advocacy. And please join us on Wednesday, January 25 at 3PM for our [Policy Update Webinar](#), where we'll focus in on what's next with efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) and provide updates on the Hill and with the Transition. [Register today!](#)

Sincerely,

YWCA USA Public Policy & Advocacy Team

### House and Senate vote on Budget Resolution to Begin Repeal Process for Affordable Care Act

Congress has passed [S.Con.Res. 3](#) which serves as the vehicle for budget reconciliation instructions to repeal the Affordable Care Act (also known as "Obamacare"). The budget resolution is a nonbinding spending plan that does not have to be approved by the president, but sets forth instructions for repealing the tax and spending provisions of the Affordable Care Act.

The reconciliation legislation will likely include elimination of:

- Medicaid expansion
- Premium subsidies
- Employer mandate
- Individual mandate
- New taxes

Speaker Ryan has also indicated that this legislation will "defund" Planned Parenthood, which could mean limiting Medicaid reimbursements to Planned Parenthood for preventative health services. The legislation will only require 51 votes in the Senate and is filibuster proof.

The House and Senate committees of jurisdiction must draft and pass such legislation, in accordance with the budget resolution, which indicates a January 27 deadline. As previously stated, the budget resolution is non-binding and the committees are expected to take more time beyond the January 27 deadline to meet this requirement.

[How Republicans Can Repeal Obamacare Piece by Piece](#) [The New York Times]

[Obamacare Repeal Moves a Step Closer to Reality](#) [The Atlantic]

[Congress Pushes Forward with Budget Resolution; Budget Reconciliation and Byrd Rule: Primer](#) [The National Law Review]

[House, Senate Pass Budget Resolution in First Step Toward Repealing Obamacare](#) [The National Law Review]

## **Senate Judiciary Committee Holds Hearing on Senator Jeff Sessions for Attorney General Nominee**

On January 10, Senator Jeff Sessions testified in front of the Senate Judiciary Committee on his nomination to serve as President Trump's Attorney General. YWCA USA submitted a [letter](#) to the Senate Judiciary Committee expressing opposition to his nomination.

During the hearing, Senator Sessions was asked questions about his position on a variety of civil rights and legal issues, including the Violence Against Women Act, which he voted against in 2013; the Supreme Court decision which struck down major provisions of the Voting Rights Act, which he celebrated; and court proceedings such as *Roe v. Wade* and *Obergefell v. Hodges*. In terms of his voting record, Senator Sessions affirmed his beliefs and votes, but stated that despite his personal feelings about the court decisions, he would follow the law if confirmed to be Attorney General. Senator Sessions testimony did nothing to dissuade Democrats on the committee about their concerns, nor did it assuage the concerns of many in the women's rights and civil rights communities who have expressed opposition to his nomination.

Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ), broke Senate history by being the first sitting senator to testify against another sitting senator nominated for a Cabinet position. The Judiciary Committee is scheduled to vote on his nomination on January 24, followed soon thereafter by a vote of the full Senate. There's still time to [take action](#) by calling your Senator and urging her/him to vote no.

[Senate Committee Holds Hearings on Donald Trump's Attorney General Pick Jeff Sessions](#) [Time]

[Sessions Takes on Racism Charges; Pledges to Recuse Himself from Clinton Probes](#) [CNN Politics]

## **Ben Carson Appears Before the U.S. Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs**

On January 12, Dr. Ben Carson, President Trump's nominee for Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) testified on his nomination. YWCA USA continues to have [concerns](#) about Dr. Carson's experience for this particular role, as well as his troubling stances on issues of equity.

During the Senate hearing, many senators questioned Dr. Carson on his experience and knowledge of housing and urban development policy and issues. Dr. Carson highlighted his belief that his personal experiences, especially being brought up under impoverished circumstances, gave him knowledge and understanding of the issues effecting Americans represented by HUD. Additionally, senators questioned Dr. Carson on his previous criticisms of public assistance programs, many of which are operated by HUD. Dr. Carson affirmed the importance of HUD's rental assistance program and promised to ensure LGBT individuals have equal access and rights in the programs administered by HUD. A committee vote on Dr. Carson is scheduled for January 24, with the full Senate vote anticipated to closely follow.

[Carson Pushes Increased Private-Sector Role in HUD Programs](#) [The Washington Post]  
[Ben Carson Sits for Hearing Amid Questions about Qualifications](#) [CNN Politics]

### **House Passes H.R. 315, the Improving Access to Maternity Care Act**

As part of one of our new legislative and policy priorities, YWCA USA is pleased to see the House passed [H.R. 315](#), the Improving Access to Maternity Care Act on January 9. The legislation, as it currently stands, would require the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to identify maternal health care professional shortage areas, and assign health care professionals to these areas. Additionally, the legislation would require HRSA to collect and publish data on the need and availability of maternity health care professionals in identified area. The legislation is bipartisan and passed the House by a vote of 405-0. YWCA USA will work to raise awareness of this legislation in the Senate and will work towards passage of this legislation, as well as similar bills.

[Maternity Care Act Passage Meets ACOG Approval](#) [MedPageToday]

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