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**By Congressman Mike Quigley (IL-05)**

Illinoisans and women in particular owe a great deal of gratitude to Congressman Quigley for his courageous vote to reform our broken health care system.

But Rep. Quigley didn't come to his "yes" vote easily. He held out his support of the bill until the end. It's not because he was against the legislation he strongly believes in the need to reform our health care system but rather he recognized that his vote was a critical bargaining chip to protect women's reproductive rights. Holding out his vote was the only way not to further deteriorate the bill on the issue of choice. And it worked.

Rep. Quigley made it clear to House leadership that if a deal was cut with anti-abortion [Democrats](#) to amend the bill it would mean losing his vote. They could not afford to lose any votes in this tight battle. So at the end of the day, Rep. Quigley was able to help pass [health care reform](#) and protect a woman's right to choose from being compromised further because he used his vote strategically.

As a result of his support of health care reform, millions more women and families will have access to vital, lifesaving health coverage. The bill emphasizes prevention and guarantees access to basic care like lifesaving screenings for cervical and [breast](#) cancer at no cost to individuals. The bill also protects women against gender discrimination by private insurers, ends the practice of dropping coverage because of pre-existing conditions such as pregnancy, and significantly increases access to reproductive health care.

Representative Quigley understands what this legislation means for women and families across the country. And because of his vote for this historic health care bill, millions of Americans will gain access to quality, affordable health care.

-- Carole Brite, Planned Parenthood of Illinois, Interim CEO