

Rep. Knezek offered the following resolution:

House Resolution No. 400.

A resolution to memorialize the Congress of the United States to enact legislation that would prohibit for-profit employers from using religious beliefs to deny employees coverage for contraception or any other vital health service required by federal law.

Whereas, The U.S. Supreme Court recently ruled in *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby* that closely held for-profit corporations can ignore the federal mandate and refuse to cover birth control and potentially other basic health care services in their group employee health plans on the basis of a religious objection. Under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, the court held that these corporations have a right to deny coverage for birth control because its religious expression would be substantially burdened by the federal mandate; and

Whereas, The Religious Freedom Restoration Act was intended to protect an individual's religious freedom, not a corporations, from oppression. Under the Court's decision, this intent has been twisted such that, rather than protecting people's religious beliefs from powerful entities, the act now sanctions corporations imposing its beliefs on its employees; and

Whereas, Birth control is a form of basic health care that is often imperative to a woman's health. Ninety-nine percent of sexually active women use birth control at least once in their lifetimes. Birth control prevents unwanted pregnancies and the inherent risks involved in any pregnancy. Even in our modern society, about 650 women die each year in the United States from complications related to pregnancy and delivery. In addition, an estimated 6.5 million women have cited other health benefits for choosing their birth control method, and more than 1.5 million women rely on contraceptives solely to address other health issues, such as endometriosis. Employers and politicians should not be inserting themselves into medical decisions that should be made privately between a woman and her physician; and

Whereas, Affordability is one of the major barriers for women to access birth control. The most effective contraceptives are often out of the reach of lower-income women. Health plans that cover contraception allow women, married or single, to choose freely, without worrying about cost, if they want to pursue healthy sexual relationships but not have a child; and

Whereas, Employers restricting or prohibiting access to birth control for their employees is a form of discrimination against women. Access to birth control has a direct connection to women's educational achievement, ability to compete in the workplace, and career success; and

Whereas, Congressional legislation has been introduced to ensure women receive necessary health care. The Protect Women's Health From Corporate Interference Act of 2014 (H.R. 5051 and S. 2578) would prohibit employers from denying employees health benefits, including contraception coverage, required under federal law; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we memorialize the Congress of the United States to enact legislation that would prohibit for-profit employers from using religious beliefs to deny employees coverage for contraception or any other vital health service required by federal law; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.