

The worst kind of middle ground

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The Democrats have built their majority by expanding their tent; as a result there is now a sizable group of antiabortion Democrats in Congress. The new abortion divide—intra- along with inter-party—has shaken the Democratic consensus on health insurance reform.

In a [commentary](#) for the *Century*,

I take a look at the Stupak Amendment, the 11th-hour addition to the House health-insurance bill that would ban abortion coverage in the bill's "public option" plan and in most plans sold on new insurance exchanges. I argue against the amendment on the grounds that it would perpetuate further the existing income gap in abortion access.

While

Americans lack consensus on abortion rights, our laws too often reflect a perverse consensus on whose rights matter most: it's far easier politically to go after those with less money. The centrist position on abortion (to the extent that such a thing exists) tends to focus on low-income women and the sets of bad choices they're often faced with. It downplays the tougher ethical questions: what about women with comfortable incomes and good insurance who simply don't want to have a baby? Should *they* have access to elective abortion?

If the

Stupak Amendment becomes law, they may well be the only ones who do. All eyes are on the Senate, where Sen. Orrin Hatch is [expected](#) to introduce a similar amendment to the Senate's health-insurance bill.