I join with the American Association of University Women (AAUW) in
asking you to accept the recommendations of the Institute of Medicine as
pertaining to coverage of preventive care under the new health care law,
and to reject any exemptions for “religious employers.” These preventive
services are a critical element of the new law and would provide
countless women better access to necessary health care.

While AAUW believes that “religious refusal” exemptions unjustly deny
women access to contraceptive services, others, driven by an ideological
distaste for all contraceptive services, are pushing the government to
make exemptions even larger. Indeed, some groups are pushing for the
exemption to apply to religiously-run health providers, so hospitals
with religious affiliations would be exempt from the coverage
requirement, even though they employ people of all faiths and
ideologies. If granted, this larger exemption would deny access to
thousands of women just because of where they work.

I urge you to ensure women have access to quality preventive care by
accepting IOM’s recommendations and rejecting the proposed religious
refusal exemption provisions.