

CONGRESSMAN DINGELL: CALL BART STUPAK ON HIS LIES ABOUT ABORTION

John Dingell says he is going to try to persuade Stupak to drop his efforts to sink healthcare with his anti-choice efforts.

The Congress is a place where we represent our people and where we serve our conscience. I strongly disagree with Bart, I think he's wrong. But he was my friend. He is my friend. We hunt, we have campaigned together, and I'm going to try and show him the error of his ways. And I'm also going to try and see to it that we beat him on this because this is a matter of the utmost humanitarian and economic concern to this nation.

As of right now, the deal that Stupak made with Pelosi is off—he has postponed his press conference and Henry Waxman and Lynn Woolsey have said there is no deal on abortion.

But that leaves the problem of whip count. If Democrats lose all the people who had signed onto the Stupak deal, then they will have to get the vote of every single remaining fence-sitter to be able to pass the bill.

Which probably means it's not going to pass unless some of those anti-choice Stupak supporters will flip and vote for health care anyway.

I've long said that Dingell would be the most likely person to persuade Stupak to let this pass. Not only is Dingell the living history of efforts to pass health care, he has been a mentor to Stupak over his career. So the man who

most wants to pass this bill (from a sense of personal destiny) also has a bit of leverage to persuade Stupak.

What I'd like to see Dingell do—aside from talking to Stupak personally—is call Stupak out on his lies, his utterly false claim that the Nelson language doesn't already restrict access to choice more than it is restricted now, and that only his language would preserve the intent of the Hyde Amendment.

But that's simply an out-and-out lie.

Not only do Stupak's claims about the fungibility of money fall flat (as Rachel explains), but his language would add onerous new barriers to choice for women everywhere. As a key GWU study shows,

In view of how the health benefit services industry operates and how insurance product design responds to broad regulatory intervention aimed at reshaping product content, we conclude that the treatment exclusions required under the Stupak/Pitts Amendment will have an industry-wide effect, eliminating coverage of medically indicated abortions over time for all women, not only those whose coverage is derived through a health insurance exchange. As a result, Stupak/Pitts can be expected to move the industry away from current norms of coverage for medically indicated abortions. In combination with the Hyde Amendment, Stupak/Pitts will impose a coverage exclusion for medically indicated abortions on such a widespread basis that the health benefit services industry can be expected to recalibrate product design downward across the board in order to accommodate the exclusion in selected markets.

Now, Stupak can claim he's simply making a

principled stand so long as the media refuses to call him on his lies. But if Dingell called him on it—if Dingell pointed out that this is not a principled stand, but rather an opportunistic effort to exploit a historic moment to attack women's reproductive rights—then he will not have cover for his actions.

Bart Stupak is not only threatening to kill health insurance reform out of desire to impose his beliefs on women around the country. But he's doing so using out and out lies.

And it's time somebody called him on those lies.