I urge my colleagues to support the DeGette amendment.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Chairman, as an advocate for Women's Choice I strongly support Representative DeGETTE's amendment. Representative DeGETTE's amendment will strike the language in the Commerce Justice State Appropriations bill which would prohibit federal funds from being used for abortions in prison.

Abortion is a legal health care option for American women, and has been for over 20 years. Because Federal prisoners are totally dependent on health care services provided by the Bureau of Prisons, the ban, in effect will prevent these women from seeking the needed reproductive health care that should be every woman's right—the right to choose an abortion.

We know that most women who enter prison are poor. Many of them are victims of violence (women from Colorado (Ms. DeGETTE). Some of them are pregnant before entering prison. An unwanted pregnancy is a difficult issue in even a supportive environment. However, limited prenatal care, isolation from family and friends and the certain custody loss of the infant upon birth, result often in late term births. If a woman is pregnant before entering prison and the life of the baby is at risk, she will almost certainly be forced to give up their child. Why should we add to their anguish by denying them access to reproductive services?

Even worse, prison health services are inadequate for pregnant women. A 1999 report by Amnesty International USA revealed that gynecological services for women in prisons are inadequate and of poor quality. So, not only are we forcing women to carry pregnancies to term, but we are forcing them to do so in an environment where medical conditions are notoriously bad. We, therefore, increase the risk of late-term miscarriages and other potentially life threatening complications. That is dangerous and unnecessary.

Furthermore, we ought to keep this debate in perspective. This ban on abortions does not stop thousands of abortions from taking place, rather it will only force a very small number of women to carry their pregnancies to term. By that time, she is no longer eligible for abortion ($200), but by that time she is no longer able to earn money. So the legislation essentially bans abortion services for women in prison.

Remember, many women prisoners are victims of physical or sexual abuse and are pregnant before entering prison. In addition, they will almost certainly be forced to give up their children at birth. Why should we add to their anguish by denying them access to reproductive services?

I know full well that the authors of this ban, Mr. Chairman, as an advocate for Women's Choice I understand that the authors of this ban on federal funds for women in prison (Ms. DeGETTE) have the required paperwork so the staff in fact has the paperwork ready, but I think they have all fled to the cloakrooms. I urge my colleagues to support the DeGette amendment. Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Chairman, as an advocate for Women's Choice I strongly support Representative DeGETTE's amendment. Representative DeGETTE's amendment will strike the language in the Commerce Justice State Appropriations bill which would prohibit federal funds from being used for abortions in prison.

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The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. When the Committee of the Whole rose earlier today, the bill was open for amendments from page 39, line 18, through page 39, line 24.

SEQUENTIAL VOTES POSTPONED IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, proceedings will now resume on those amendments on which further proceedings were postponed in the following order: The amendment offered by the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LUCAS); amendment No. 2 offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. HINCHIEY); the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. DEGETTE).

The Chair will reduce to 5 minutes the time for any electronic vote after the first vote in this series.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. LUCAS OF OKLAHOMA

The CHAIRMAN. The pending business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LUCAS) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the votes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The Clerk designated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

AYES—187

NOES—227

In the Committee of the Whole

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 2500.