



NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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NOW Sad to See Connie Saltonstall Leave Michigan Race, Thanks Her for Standing up to Anti-Abortion Incumbent Bart Stupak

Statement of NOW President and NOW/PAC Chair Terry O'Neill

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The National Organization for Women is sad to see Connie Saltonstall withdraw from the congressional race in Michigan's 1st District. Saltonstall bravely stepped forward to take on the incumbent -- reproductive rights foe and health care reform obstructor Rep. Bart Stupak -- in the state's Democratic primary. She opened the door for other candidates and may even have lead to Stupak's decision not to seek another term. And how did the Democratic Party reward her? Disgracefully, by withholding its support.

Connie Saltonstall is a strong supporter of the full range of feminist issues, including reproductive justice, affirmative action, pay equity, constitutional equality and equal marriage rights. She is just the kind of legislator we need more of on Capitol Hill. Women continue to be sorely under-represented at the highest levels of our government, making up just 17 percent of the U.S. Congress. But we cannot hope to correct this imbalance without the backing of state and national party leaders.

We've seen this far too often, most recently with Jennifer Brunner in Ohio and Elaine Marshall in North Carolina -- promising women candidates who are given the cold shoulder by their party. As in other areas, women politicians often lag behind men when it comes to financial resources, making their party's assistance even more critical. A political party's seal of approval often determines who wins a primary and it can drive other, lesser-funded candidates out of the race.

NOW thanks Connie Saltonstall for standing up for women. Connie saw an injustice take place during the health care debate, and she decided to do something about it. We hope that other women will follow her lead and continue running for office, even when it means challenging a longtime incumbent. And NOW hopes that Connie will continue running in future races, because we believe she has a bright future, and we believe that women and girls can benefit greatly from her leadership.

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