



## *Pro-Life Activities*

UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

September 6, 2007

Dear Senator:

The Senate is considering the State/Foreign Operations Appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2008 (H.R. 2764). The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) have written to all Senators on a range of important priorities regarding this legislation. In this additional letter I wish to comment specifically on two ways in which the bill approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee would undermine current safeguards against U.S. support for abortion and even coerced abortion abroad.

The first serious defect in this bill is language in Section 622 undermining the Mexico City Policy, which has prevented U.S. family planning assistance from being diverted to non-governmental organizations that perform and promote abortion as family planning. The bill rescinds this policy wherever U.S. assistance is “in kind” (donated contraceptives) rather than cash. Of course, whatever the form of the aid, it remains true that abortion-promoting organizations will exploit their status as the conduits for U.S. aid to promote abortion to vulnerable women in the Third World.

A detailed case against this policy change was made in letters to both House and Senate in June (see [www.usccb.org/prolife/issues/abortion/mexicocity2007.pdf](http://www.usccb.org/prolife/issues/abortion/mexicocity2007.pdf)). Here I wish only to reiterate that the new congressional leadership has endorsed the general consensus that Congress should work to “reduce abortions.” Unfortunately some of the means proposed, such as expanded contraceptive programs, have been shown to be failures at achieving this goal and pose other moral problems. However, we should at least be able to agree that such efforts are hollow if programs to *reduce* abortion must be implemented through organizations that *perform and promote* abortions.

Secondly, the Senate committee’s bill would effectively nullify the Kemp-Kasten amendment that has denied any form of support for programs of coerced abortion and involuntary sterilization since 1985. For over two decades, that provision has prevented funding of “any organization or program which, as determined by the President of the United States, supports or participates in the management of a program of coercive abortion or involuntary sterilization.” The House-passed version of H.R. 2764 retains this language. However, the Senate version would eliminate all references to the President, and to supporting or participating in coercive programs; funds could not be withheld unless an organization is proved to be “directly” supporting the acts of coerced abortion and involuntary sterilization themselves. Apparently, under the new language, an organization like the U.N. Population Fund (UNFPA) may support and help manage

the brutally coercive “one child per family” program in China and receive U.S. funds, as long as UNFPA officials are not themselves imposing the punitive fines for a second child or driving the bulldozers that level the homes of non-compliant families.

Programs of coerced abortion were condemned and prosecuted as crimes against humanity at the Nuremberg trials, and more recently condemned as crimes against women at the U.N. Conference on Women in 2000. Congress has not the slightest justification for now allowing its grantees to aid and abet such atrocities, on the pretext that they will not “directly” perform the crimes they facilitate.

In short, I urge you to support all efforts on the Senate floor to remove these unwarranted policy changes from H.R. 2764.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Justin Card. Rigali". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Cardinal Justin Rigali  
Archbishop of Philadelphia  
Chairman, Committee for Pro-Life Activities  
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops