



Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities

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Dear Senator:

This week the Senate is expected to take up H.R. 2354, a “minibus” or package of three appropriations bills for Fiscal Year 2012 -- Energy/Water, Financial Services, and State/Foreign Operations. You have already received a November 2 letter from the Catholic bishops’ conference and Catholic Relief Services, urging you to oppose further reductions in desperately needed poverty-focused development and humanitarian programs (see <http://usccb.org/about/international-justice-and-peace/index.cfm>).

As it works to preserve these life-affirming programs, the Senate should also remove from the Financial Services and State/Foreign Operations bills four provisions that pose a direct threat to innocent human life:

1. The Senate’s Financial Services bill completely eliminates Congress’s longstanding provision against federal funding of health plans that cover elective abortions in the **Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP)**. Thus Congress will directly use taxpayers’ funds for elective abortion coverage – contradicting repeated assurances by supporters of the health care reform law of 2010 that Congress had no intent of doing so. Senator Tom Coburn (R-OK) will offer an amendment to restore the ban in current law.

2. The Financial Services bill would also reverse the current policy, in effect for most of the last 22 years, against spending any congressionally appropriated funds on elective abortions in the **District of Columbia**. Senator Mike Johanns (R-NE) will offer an amendment to maintain the D.C. abortion funding ban that President Obama signed into law this spring.

3. Report language accompanying the State /Foreign Operations bill recommends \$40 million for the **United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)**, despite that agency’s continued support for a brutal program of coerced abortion and involuntary sterilization in China. Senator Roger Wicker (R-KS) will offer an amendment to eliminate this funding.

4. Section 7086 of the State/Foreign Operations bill would permanently ban restoration of the **Mexico City Policy**, which during the Reagan and Bush administrations prevented U.S. funding of foreign non-governmental organizations that perform and promote abortion as a method of family planning. In fact the bill’s provision sweeps even more broadly, so that *no* harmful or destructive “health or medical service” may render an organization ineligible for U.S. funds if that “service” is permitted in the host country and “would not violate United States law.”

This last requirement is almost meaningless, as even infanticide, euthanasia and other lethal procedures are generally forbidden by individual state laws and not by United States law. In short, this provision effectively says that if a foreign nation allows medical personnel to abuse men, women and children, the United States will subsidize the perpetrators. Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT) will offer an amendment to strike this anti-human rights provision.

I urge you to support all these amendments, to ensure that federal taxpayers' funds are not used to attack and demean innocent human life. At a time when Congress is tempted to reduce even vitally important programs that serve the poorest and neediest people here and abroad, the moral wrong of expanding subsidies for direct violations of human life and dignity is especially egregious. With the approval of these corrective amendments, I hope funds that would have been spent to take life can be directed instead to the true needs of the poor and vulnerable.

Sincerely,

Cardinal Daniel DiNardo

Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo
Chairman, Committee on Pro-Life Activities
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops