



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on May 10, 2017

Pro-life Agenda Boosted With Charmaine Yoest in HHS

The Daily Signal, the Heritage Foundation's daily Web-based newsletter, [took a close look](#) Tuesday at President Trump's recent appointment of Charmaine Yoest (shown) as top communicator at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The *Daily Signal's* writer, Rachel del Guidice, liked what she found: Yoest is one more example of the paradigm shift taking place in the Trump administration regarding the value of human life from the moment of conception.



Del Guidice interviewed Kristan Hawkins, president of Students for Life of America, who told her that "we are going to see a radical transformation occur within HHS. I fully expect us [as a society] to talk about ... the consequences of abortion on women."

Tony Perkins, head of the Family Research Council, was equally encouraged:

In her capacity in public relations ... she will have a huge impact, making sure [that the agency's] policies are consistent with [HHS's Secretary Tom Price's] vision inside and out ... I think [she's] going to have a significant impact.

Almost from the day of her graduation from Wheaton College in 1986, Yoest has been involved in politics, initially working as a staffer in the Reagan administration. Over time, her interest and skills in the pro-life movement led her to become a policy analyst and then vice president at the Family Research Council. After that she became president and CEO of Americans United for Life (AUL), following which she joined Gary Bauer's American Values pro-life group as a senior fellow.

In her new position as assistant secretary for public affairs at HHS, she will be in charge of all iterations of communications for the agency including writing speeches for Price, involving herself in the agency's strategic planning, and managing the agency's broadcast and digital communications.

Her appointment resulted in howls of protests from the abortion industry, including, not surprisingly, Planned Parenthood (PP). Dawn Laguens, PP's executive vice president, declared:

It is unacceptable that someone with a history of promoting myths and false information about women's health is appointed to a government position whose main responsibility is to provide the public with accurate and factual information. [Yoest] has spent her whole professional life opposing access to birth control and a woman's right to a safe, legal abortion.

Liberal Senator Patty Murray (D-Wash.) issued a statement of protest as well:

Ms. Yoest has a long record of seeking to undermine women's access to health care and safe, legal abortion by distorting the facts, and her selection shows yet again that this administration is pandering to extreme conservatives and ignoring the millions of men and women nationwide who support women's constitutionally-protected health care rights [and who] don't want to go backward.



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This shift by President Trump in ideology toward life began on January 23 when he reinstated the “Mexico City Policy” that was rescinded by President Obama. That policy blocks federal spending for NGOs (non-governmental organizations) that provide abortion services or referrals, or advocate to decriminalize abortion or expand abortion services. With that single action, Trump cut off an estimated \$500 million to those NGOs.

This was followed shortly thereafter with the Trump administration defunding the pro-abortion United Nations Population Fund (another \$75 million) and then signing a bill to allow states to defund Planned Parenthood in their own jurisdictions.

Trump is riding on a train of pro-life momentum. On the average, states have added 57 new abortion restrictions every year between 2011 and 2015, with the number accelerating over time, according to the Guttmacher Institute.

Perhaps the most telling shift in ideology and policy is the fact that Yoest is replacing an Obama appointee who immediately joined Planned Parenthood. As Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of the pro-life group Susan B. Anthony List, expressed it:

The fact that Yoest will be replacing Kevin Griffis, who now works for Planned Parenthood, is another indicator of the dramatic change we’ve seen in Washington since the election of President Trump.

This is a new era for the pro-life movement and our fight to protect unborn children and their mothers from the horror of abortion.

Photo: Charmaine Yoest

An Ivy League graduate and former investment advisor, Bob is a regular contributor to The New American magazine and blogs frequently at [LightFromTheRight.com](#), primarily on economics and politics. He can be reached at badelman@thenewamerican.com.

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