



Written by [Rebecca Terrell](#) on November 18, 2009

Obama Opposes Pro-life Efforts in Healthcare Reform

President Obama and abortion advocates in the Senate plan to remove pro-life language in the healthcare reform bill that passed the House on November 7. Their guns are aimed at the Stupak Amendment, a measure that ensures taxpayers' money will not fund abortions.

The amendment prohibits insurance plans in the socialized exchange set up by Obamacare from covering abortion.

Advocates of the amendment say it merely maintains the status quo begun by the Hyde Amendment, a rider renewed annually since 1976 as part of a federal spending bill. The Hyde Amendment prohibits the use of federal funds to pay for abortion. Opponents claim the Stupak Amendment goes farther than that, limiting women's "reproductive choices" by forcing individuals enrolled in the government plan to purchase separate out-of-pocket abortion coverage.



White House Senior Advisor David Axelrod says Obama opposes the Stupak Amendment for this reason. "The president has said repeatedly... that he doesn't believe that this bill should change the status quo as it relates to the issue of abortion," said Axelrod in a [CNN interview](#) early this week. "He's going to work with the Senate and the House to try to ensure that at the end of the day the status quo is not changed."

In an interview with ABC News, Obama indicated he wants to preserve the spirit of the Hyde Amendment without limiting women's insurance choices, commenting that "we're not looking to change what is a core principle that has been in place for a very long time, which is federal dollars are not used to subsidize abortions."

Senate Budget Chairman Kent Conrad (D-N.D.) confirmed Obama's claims when he [told CNN](#), "What is clear is... for this bill to be successful, there cannot be taxpayer funding of abortion." Yet Democratic opposition to the Stupak Amendment indicates the final Senate language will likely not permit federal funds to pay outright for abortions but will not restrict government subsidies for insurance plans that cover them.

There is also debate that abortion restrictions contained in the Stupak Amendment will have very little adverse financial effect on women since they already pay for abortions out-of-pocket or with private health insurance. [The Wall Street Journal](#) reports that the most expensive abortions, averaging \$5,000, are those performed in the late second or third trimesters, making up only 1 percent of abortions nationwide. Ninety percent of women who have abortions do so in the first trimester and spend a



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comparatively modest average of \$413.

The irony of the Stupak Amendment debate is that though its authors seem like heroes in the pro-life movement, they succeeded in garnering support for Obama's socialized healthcare bill. Anti-abortion Democrats in Congress had threatened in June to vote against healthcare that contained abortion funding. Once they got the language they wanted, they helped pass a bill that could lead to government making life-and-death decisions for more than the unborn. It will not matter what coverage people have when they cannot get necessary healthcare because of shortages caused by government rationing.



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