



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on June 22, 2011

Boxer Introduces Act to Remove Ban on Taxpayer-funded Military Abortions

Last September, Congressional Democrats attempted to insert a provision into a military spending authorization bill that would have ended the longstanding ban on elective military abortions at overseas hospitals. As a result, the spending bill failed and the ban remained in effect. Now, California's liberal Senator Barbara Boxer (left) has elected to make military abortions a focal point by introducing the MARCH for Military Women Act (Military Access to Reproductive Care and Health).



Introduced by Boxer and her colleagues Kristen Gillibrand, Patty Murray, Jeanne Shaheen and Frank Lautenberg, the bill not only ends the ban on military abortions but includes a provision that would allow taxpayers to pay for those abortions performed in Department of Defense medical facilities.

LifeNews.com [reports](#):

Current law in effect since 1996 prohibits the performance of abortion by Department of Defense medical personnel or at DOD medical facilities. A separate provision prohibits the use of DOD funds for abortion except to save the life of the mother. The MARCH for Military Women Act would lift the current bans and abortion advocates have tried for years to force military base hospitals to do abortions on female service members.

Lautenberg explained her motivation for supporting the bill:

Women who bravely choose to serve our country in the military shouldn't have to forfeit their rights. When military hospitals fail to provide reproductive health services, women serving in foreign countries are left without access to safe and legal health care. This is unjust treatment for our servicewomen that must be brought to an end.

Boxer's bill has already garnered the support of groups such as Planned Parenthood, the National Abortion Federation, and the ACLU.

LifeNews.com writes of the bill's advocates:

Backers of the bill are using the issue of sexual assaults in the military as [a] platform for pushing lifting the abortion funding ban, by saying that women military members who become victims of such assaults and wind up pregnant should be able to have an abortion of their unborn child paid for at taxpayer expense. The legislation already has the endorsement of pro-abortion groups like



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the National Abortion Federation, the ACLU, NARAL, and Planned Parenthood. The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, which has become a more active abortion proponent, also endorses the bill.

Those opposed to the bill include the National Right to Life Committee, the Susan B. Anthony List, and Americans United for Life.

Christian Medical Association Vice President Gene Rudd, M.D., who received the Gorgas Award for his service in the military, observed of the bill,

If enacted, requiring military physicians to perform abortions threatens military readiness. Furthermore, just as we have seen a marked decrease in young doctors entering OB/Gyn training for fear of being forced to do an abortion, this requirement will discourage young doctors from joining the military.

Similar legislation to Boxer's has been introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives by Rep. Louise Slaughter (D-N.Y.).

Democrats already made several [efforts](#) last year to permit tax-funded abortions at U.S. military base hospitals. Because of a Republican filibuster, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid was unable to acquire the necessary votes for cloture that would have stopped debate and allowed a vote to be cast on the legislation. This, however, did not stop Reid from bringing up the bill anyway.

The second effort to move ahead with the measure was unsuccessful, as the vote failed 57 to 40. All Democrats voted for cloture except Senator Joe Manchin of West Virginia, who as Governor of the state established a pro-life reputation because of his voting record. All Republicans voted against the bill, including pro-choice Republicans, with the exception of Senator Susan Collins of Maine.

After the series of unsuccessful attempts at overturning the ban on military abortions, Americans United for Life Action president Charmaine Yoest declared,

We applaud the outstanding leaders in the Senate who led the fight to win today's key vote rejecting taxpayer-funded abortion in the military. They stood on principle and scored again a major victory for our service members and their families. We know that more than 70 percent of Americans oppose taxpayer funding of abortion, and this vote reflected the moral and fiscal values of Americans.

A majority of Americans continue to oppose taxpayer-funded abortions, a figure that has seemingly been ignored by Boxer and her colleagues. As even more pro-life Republicans entered Congress as a result of the 2010 midterm elections, the chances that Barbara Boxer's bill may pass are slim.



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