



Catholic Health Association Backs Senate Bill

Inserting the appearance of ambiguity where none exists, the New York Times is promoting a statement by the Catholic Health Association in support of the Senate version of so-called "healthcare reform," which many observers perceive to be opening the way for public funding of abortion.



According to [the New York Times article](#),

In an apparent split with Roman Catholic bishops over the abortion-financing provisions of the proposed health care overhaul, the nation's Catholic hospitals have signaled that they back the Senate's compromise on the issue, raising hopes of breaking an impasse in Congress and stirring controversy within the church.

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The Senate bill, approved Thursday morning, allows any state to bar the use of federal subsidies for insurance plans that cover abortion and requires insurers in other states to divide subsidy money into separate accounts so that only dollars from private premiums would be used to pay for abortions.

Just days before the bill passed, the Catholic Health Association, which represents hundreds of Catholic hospitals across the country, said in a statement that it was "encouraged" and "increasingly confident" that such a compromise "can achieve the objective of no federal funding for abortion." An umbrella group for nuns followed its lead.

The action by the Catholic Health Association — and the effort to give an appearance of ambiguity regarding church teaching — was greeted with anger by many traditionalists within the Roman Catholic Church. For example, Deacon Keith Fournier, [writing for Catholic.org](#), declared,

On December 28 in the Octave of Christmas we commemorate the Feast of the Holy Innocents. The readings for the Liturgy remind us of the nature of evil; it has no respect for life. In fact, it hates life! The first reading is taken from the 1st letter of the beloved disciple John. John reminds us: "This is the message that we have heard from Jesus Christ and proclaim to you: God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all. If we say, 'We have fellowship with him,' while we continue to walk in darkness, we lie and do not act in truth." (I John 5)

When we read these words how can we not think of those in governance in the United States of America who, though insisting that they are doing good by providing health care for those who cannot afford it, have allowed legislation to be passed in the Senate which will allow Federal funds to kill the new holy innocents?...



Written by [James Heiser](#) on December 29, 2009

In an article entitled “Catholic hospitals and bishops split on Senate health-bill abortion compromise,” David Kirkpatrick recently reported, “In an apparent split with Roman Catholic bishops over the abortion-financing provisions of the proposed health care overhaul, the nation’s Catholic hospitals have signaled that they back the Senate’s compromise on the issue, raising hopes of breaking an impasse in Congress and stirring controversy within the church.”

Well, get ready. The U.S. Catholic Bishops will not back down because they cannot back down. Truth is truth. If leaders in the “Catholic Health Care Association” want to compromise on the fundamental human right to life, they will not succeed and they are not reading the clear Social teaching of their own church properly.

As the Roman Catholic, Episcopal, and Lutheran Churches observed the Festival of the Holy Innocents this Christmas season, one wonders how many parish pastors and priests observed such a point of connection. The slide of what many once called a “Christian nation” into a culture of death is typified by widespread acceptance of legalized abortion. As legalization of abortion has given a perception of moral acceptability since the 1970s (the false notion that what is legal is also moral), presumably an action that permits any public funding of abortion will increase the degree of such ethical confusion.

Whether the U.S. Catholic Bishops and other American church leaders will resist pressure to “back down” remains to be seen. However, given the hierarchical polity of the Roman Catholic Church, the action by the Catholic Health Association should be kept in perspective. It is not a matter of whether their position, or that of the bishops, represents the “majority” position within the Roman Catholic Church: It is a question of whether the position of the Catholic Health Association on the issue of abortion is in *conformity* to the teaching of the Church. For any conservative Christian church that understands the Word of God to be the truth, social teaching is ultimately not a matter of democracy, but divinely given doctrine.

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