



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on March 18, 2010

## Healthcare Bill Rife with Provisions Funding Abortion

As the House of Representatives rushes to pass the version of a healthcare bill passed in December by the Senate, particular emphasis is being paid by Americans to key provisions in the measure. One of the most controversial elements, and one of most importance to many voters, is whether the bill under consideration will permit federal dollars to fund abortions.



Struggling to cobble together a filibuster-proof coalition of supporters, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-N.Y.) went out of his way to assure pro-life senators (and by extension, likeminded constituents) that no government money would be used to pay for abortions, no federally-managed health insurance policy would subsidize abortions, and no healthcare provider that performed abortions would receive federal dollars.

Senator Reid's assurances may have more purchase with concerned citizens if it wasn't for the fact that as a candidate, the bill's biggest backer — President Barack Obama — [promised pro-abortion activists](#) that abortion coverage would be "at the heart" of any health care scheme he would propose as President. Judging from the vague language and textual gymnastics still extant in the health care bill, President Obama remains committed to fulfilling that promise and knows that such trickery is necessary to sneak such coverage passed the watchful gaze of wary abortion foes.

One staunch pro-life organization insists, as a matter of fact, that the Senate bill "[will allow direct funding of abortion without restriction](#)." The National Right to Life Committee warns that despite politicians' pledges to the contrary, there is no unqualified proscription of abortion funding to be found on any of the 2,407-page legislative labyrinth approved by the Senate late last year and now being pushed through the House of Representatives.

Other abortion foes have similarly warned that the mammoth measure is pocked with loopholes through which abortion coverage can pass. James Dobson's Family Research Council (FRC) makes just such a claim in a [press release](#) published on its website in February. The statement quotes current FRC president Tony Perkins as stating that President Obama and Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) are deliberately misleading the public about the health care bill's prohibitions on abortion funding. "The President and Speaker Pelosi should be ashamed of their misleading statements. The legislation that President Obama is pushing provides federal subsidies for health plans that cover abortions, authorizes plans to cover elective abortions, and funds community health care centers to the tune of 11 billion taxpayer dollars without any abortion restrictions," asserts Perkins in a statement quoted in the press release.



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It is in the funding of these health care centers that has drawn the ire of many attentive abortion opponents. According to Section 10503 of H.R. 3590, \$7 billion dollars in taxpayer money is appropriated over five years for the maintenance of Community Health Centers (also called Federally Qualified Health Centers, or FQHCs). There are presently over 1,200 such facilities. Because the bill directly apportions this money, these funds will bypass the annual approval process through which appropriations for the Department of Health and Human Services typically must pass. Therefore, these funds would not be covered by the Hyde Amendment. The Hyde Amendment prohibits most federal funding of abortion.

This is more than an innocent oversight attributable to the haste with which the bill was shoved through the Senate. There was time to make explicit proscription on abortion funding in other provisions of the bill. For example, the section of the bill apportioning money to the Indian Health Service contains the following restriction: "Any limitation pursuant to other Federal laws on the use of Federal funds to the Service shall apply with respect to the performance or coverage of abortions." Other similar qualifications are included in various expenditures authorized in the bill. It would seem then that the lawmakers who crafted this behemoth subscribe to the axiom that the devil is in the details. And the details herein provide a port of entry to a great evil.

The chicanery of congressional abortion proponents has provided other outlets for abortion funding in the text of the health care bill being deliberated. One of the most pernicious portals for the federal funding of abortion is found in Section 1001 of the legislation. This provision, known as the Mikulski Amendment for Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-Md.) authorizes government appointed bureaucrats to request funds for payment of "preventative services" as defined by the Department of Health and Human Services. Upon receiving such a request, the Department must pay for such procedures (without copayments) for purchasers of qualified private health care insurance plans.

Finally, the bill funnels billions of dollars into pools of "directly appropriated funds" that are exempt from all other abortion prohibitions. Five billion dollars, for example, are set aside for the subsidizing of a temporary high-risk insurance pool program. An additional \$6 billion is granted to health co-operatives without specific limitation on the use of those funds for the payment of abortions.

In a few days, perhaps as [early as this weekend](#), members of the House of Representatives will be voting on a bill that, notwithstanding the vows of the President and his congressional allies, permits the use of taxpayer money for the funding of abortion. There are millions of Americans steadfastly opposed to the use of the public treasury for payment of a practice they deem both criminal and immoral. The time is short for the communication of concerns with one's elected representatives. It is imperative that all those dedicated to eliminating government sponsorship of abortion immediately contact their congressman and encourage them to vote against passage of any unconstitutional health care proposal, especially one so riddled with clandestine coverage for a most unholy act.

*Photo: Sen. Tom Coburn (R-OK) with Sen. John Barrasso (R-WY) at news conference on healthcare with House GOP physicians on March 18, 2010: AP Images*



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