



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on May 6, 2011

U.S. House Votes to Ban Abortion Funding

As reported by [Baptist Press News](#), the measure would also “serve to standardize bans on abortion funding that now exist in various federal programs, many of which have to be approved each year, and make certain the prohibition extends to all agencies.” Significantly, the report noted, the ban “would apply to last year’s health-care reform law, which authorizes federal subsidies for insurance plans that cover abortion,” and would also “establish conscience clause protections for pro-life, health-care providers.”



Before the vote, the bill’s sponsor, Representative Chris Smith, (R-N.J.), told his fellow lawmakers: “The Guttmacher Institute ... the former research arm of Planned Parenthood, has said very clearly and plainly that when there’s no public subsidy for abortions, the number of abortions drop by about 25 percent. If we want fewer abortions, take away the federal subsidy.”

Noting that for years “a patchwork of short-term policies have prevented abortion funding in many programs authorized by Congress,” Smith told his fellow legislators that “it is time for a single, government-wide permanent protection against taxpayer funding for elective abortion. Abortion is lethal violence against children and exploitation of women. This legislation would establish a comprehensive policy prohibiting public funding for elective abortion in all federal programs.”

Chief among the “patchwork” policies to which Smith referred is the Hyde Amendment, which leaders of the pro-life [National Right to Life](#), in a letter to House members urging their vote for the bill, explained has been appended to “every Health and Human Services appropriations bill since 2004.” The Right to Life officials also pointed out crucial conscience provisions in the bill, which they said “would solidify important protections for health care providers who do not wish to participate in providing abortions — which is especially important in light of the Obama Administration’s February 23, 2011 action rescinding the conscience protection regulation issued by the Bush Administration.”

House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) said the legislation sends a strong message to the Obama administration and Democrats in the Senate that Americans want an end to abortion funding. “A ban on taxpayer funding of abortions is the will of the people,” Boehner said before the vote, “and it ought to be the will of the land.” Numerous polls have confirmed that a majority of Americans oppose tax funding for abortion, including a recent CNN survey indicating 61 percent would like to see it stopped.

Nancy Keenan, of the abortion activist group NARAL Pro-Choice America, criticized Boehner for prioritizing the bill “despite facing intense public backlash for bringing the government to the brink of shutdown over defunding Planned Parenthood.” Added Keenan, “Members of Congress who support this egregious assault on women will hear from outraged Americans through phone calls, protests, petitions, and most importantly, at the ballot box in 2012.”

Among the many conservative groups and leaders applauding the House vote was [Family Research Council](#) (FRC) president Tony Perkins, who commended the “bipartisan majority of the House of



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Representatives for finding common ground by permanently banning the flow of money between the federal government and the brutal procedure of abortion.”

Despite the significant victory in the House, the applause of pro-life leaders was seasoned with a knowledge that the bill is not likely to pass the Democrat-controlled Senate, or the desk of the decidedly pro-abortion President Obama, who promised via a White House statement that he would oppose the legislation he argued “unnecessarily restricts women’s reproductive freedoms and consumers’ private insurance options.” Continued the White House statement, “If the President is presented with H.R. 3, his senior advisors would recommend that he veto the bill.”

National Right to Life’s legislative director, Douglas Johnson, said the veto threat “demonstrates yet again that President Obama is determined to expand federal subsidies for abortion on demand — despite his verbal smokescreens. The 175 House Democrats who voted against the bill will be firmly marked as supporters of federal subsidies for elective abortion.”

And Penny Nance of [Concerned Women for America](#) noted that nearly 70 percent of Americans, “pro-life and pro-choice, don’t want their dollars going to pay for abortion. If President Obama vetoes this legislation, he will be stomping on the freedoms we hold dear in this country and making every one of us complicit in abortion, a moral abhorrence for over half of the population.”

As the Senate prepared to address the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act in the coming weeks, the FRC’s Perkins called on Senate Democrats to place conscience above politics. “Compelling American taxpayers to hand over their hard earned dollars to pay for abortions can’t be justified, especially at a time when our country is facing an economic meltdown brought on by a failure to stop the out-of-control spending in Washington,” Perkins said in a statement. “We call on Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid to act on this commonsense legislation and protect American taxpayers who regardless of their views of abortion’s legality should not be forced to pay for or participate in this gruesome practice.”



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