



Committee on Migration

c/o Migration and Refugee Services, USCCB

3211 Fourth Street NE • Washington DC 20017-1194

Phone : 202-541-3227 • Fax : 202-722-8805 • E-mail mrs@usccb.org •

www.usccb.org/mrs

March 18, 2010

Dear Representative:

We write on behalf of the U.S. Catholic Bishops to reaffirm our urgent hope that Congress will approve only health care reform legislation that upholds the life, health, dignity and conscience of all. We continue to call for the exclusion of any federal funding of abortion. In this letter we particularly ask that you support the inclusion of immigrants in any health care legislation considered by the U.S. House of Representatives.

Specifically, we ask that undocumented persons in the United States not be prohibited from using their own money to purchase health care coverage in the newly created health care exchanges. We also request that the five-year ban on legal immigrants accessing Medicaid coverage be eliminated.

It is our view that proactively prohibiting undocumented immigrants from purchasing health care for their families is mean-spirited and contrary to sound public policy. Immigrants, who are generally younger and in good health, would spread the costs of health care insurance over a wider pool of recipients, thus bringing down health care rates for all Americans. Their inclusion in health care reform also would improve the health of immigrant communities and the general public health.

We also support the removal of the five-year ban on legal immigrants accessing Medicaid and other federal means-tested programs. Legal immigrants work and pay taxes just like U.S. citizens, and should benefit from the programs which their tax money funds. They also are on a path to citizenship and are permanent residents of our country and thus should be included in any health care reform.

As the House of Representatives considers health care reform, we ask that you work to include immigrants in any final measure. It is our belief that true reform will protect the vulnerable among us.

Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

+ *John C. Wester*

Most Reverend John C. Wester
Bishop of Salt Lake City, Utah
Chairman, USCCB Committee on Migration

+ *Jose H. Gomez*
Most Reverend Jose H. Gomez
Archbishop of San Antonio, Texas
Chairman-Elect, USCCB Committee on Migration

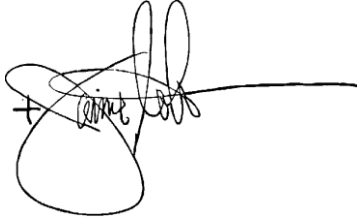
+ *Gerald R. Barnes*
Most Reverend Gerald R. Barnes
Bishop of San Bernardino, California

+ *Daniel Flores*

Most Reverend Daniel Flores
Bishop of Brownsville, Texas

+ *Richard J. Garcia*
Most Reverend Richard Garcia
Bishop of Monterey, California

+ *Carlos A. Sevilla, SJ*
Most Reverend Carlos A. Sevilla SJ
Bishop of Yakima, Washington

A handwritten signature in black ink, featuring a large, stylized initial 'J' and a horizontal line extending to the right.

Most Reverend Jaime Soto
Bishop of Sacramento, California

A handwritten signature in blue ink, written in a cursive style.

Most Reverend James A. Tamayo
Bishop of Laredo, Texas

DATE: March 18, 2010

FROM: Don Clemmer

O: 202-541-3206

M: 260-580-1137

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

U.S. BISHOPS PROVIDE RESOURCES EXPLAINING FLAWS IN SENATE HEALTH CARE BILL

WASHINGTON—The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has made available several new resources explaining its calls for essential changes to the Senate health care reform bill. In a March 15 statement, Cardinal Francis George of Chicago, President of the USCCB, said that the U.S. bishops would, regrettably, have to oppose the final bill if these changes were not made.

The resources are available at: www.usccb.org/healthcare

Among them is an analysis of the abortion funding provisions of the Senate health care bill that highlights the bishops' objections (www.usccb.org/healthcare/030410facts.pdf). Two pieces respond to recent criticisms of the bishops' position on the health care bill, namely criticisms from Timothy Stoltzfus Jost of Washington and Lee University Law School (www.usccb.org/healthcare/jost-response.pdf) and the other regarding the funding of abortion at community health centers (www.usccb.org/healthcare/communityhealthcenters.pdf).

With so much of the health care debate focusing on the nature of the legal "status quo" of federal abortion funding, the page also features a backgrounder on current federal policy on abortion funding (www.usccb.org/prolife/issues/healthcare/abortion_funding_102309.pdf) and an analysis of the House health care bill's Stupak Amendment (www.usccb.org/healthcare/StupakAmendmentFactsheet.pdf).

Keywords: U.S. Bishops, USCCB, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, health care reform, Senate bill, backgrounders, Pro-Life, abortion funding, Community Health Centers

#####

10-047

SEC,DD,Crux,Blogpolitics,PRNewswire,CNS,RNS



United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

3211 FOURTH STREET NE • WASHINGTON DC 20017-1194 • 202-541-3103 • FAX 202-541-3166

USCCB NATIONWIDE BULLETIN INSERT/ACTION ALERT

Updated 3-11-2010

Stop Abortion Funding in Health Care Reform!

Protect Conscience

Ensure Affordable Health Coverage

Allow Immigrants to Purchase Private Health Insurance

As long-time advocates of [health care reform](#), the U.S. Catholic bishops continue to make the moral case that genuine health care reform must protect the life, dignity, consciences and health of all, especially the poor and vulnerable. Health care reform should provide access to affordable and quality health care for all, and not advance a pro-abortion agenda in our country. Genuine health care reform is being blocked by those who insist on reversing widely supported policies against federal funding of abortion and plans which include abortion, not by those working simply to preserve these longstanding protections.

- On November 7, the U.S. House of Representatives passed major health care reform that reaffirms the essential, longstanding and widely supported policy against using federal funds for elective abortions and includes positive measures on affordability and immigrants.
- On December 24, the U.S. Senate rejected this policy and passed health care reform that [requires federal funds](#) to help subsidize and promote health plans that cover elective abortions. All purchasers of such plans will be required to pay for other people's abortions through a separate payment solely to pay for abortion. And the affordability credits for very low income families purchasing private plans in a Health Insurance Exchange are inadequate and would leave families financially vulnerable.
- Outside the abortion context, neither bill has adequate conscience protection for health care providers, plans or employers.
- Congressional leaders are now trying to figure out how the rules of the House and Senate could allow the final passage of a modified bill that would satisfy disagreements between House and Senate versions.

ACTION: Contact your Representative and Senators today by e-mail, phone or FAX.

- To send a pre-written, instant e-mail to Congress go to www.usccb.org/action.
- Call the U.S. Capitol switchboard at: 202-224-3121, or call your Members' local offices. Contact info can be found on Members' web sites at www.house.gov & www.senate.gov.

MESSAGE – HOUSE:

“I am pleased that the House health care bill maintains the longstanding policy against federal funding of abortion. On the other hand, the provisions on abortion funding in the current un-amended Senate health care bill are seriously deficient and unacceptable. I urge you to work to uphold essential provisions against abortion funding, to include full conscience protection and to ensure that health care is accessible and affordable for all. I urge you to oppose any bill unless and until these criteria are met.”

MESSAGE – SENATE:

“I am deeply disappointed that the current un-amended Senate health care bill fails to maintain the longstanding policy against federal funding of abortion and does not include adequate protection for conscience. I urge you to support essential provisions against abortion funding, similar to those in the House bill. Include full conscience protection and ensure that health care is accessible and affordable for all. I urge you to oppose any bill unless and until these criteria are met.”

WHEN: Votes in the House and Senate are expected at any time. **Act today!**

Thank You!



United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

3211 FOURTH STREET NE – WASHINGTON DC 20017-1194 – 202-541-3103 – FAX 202-541-3166

ACTUALIZACIÓN 11/03/10

URGENTE: VOLANTE DE USCCB PARA BOLETINES EN TODA LA NACIÓN

¡Detenga el financiamiento de abortos en la reforma del sistema de salud!

Proteja la conciencia

Garantice una cobertura asequible

Permita a los inmigrantes adquirir seguros de salud privados

Como promotores durante largo tiempo de la reforma del sistema de salud, los obispos católicos de los Estados Unidos continúan sosteniendo, desde el punto de vista moral, que una verdadera reforma debe proteger la vida, la dignidad, la conciencia y la salud de todos, especialmente de los pobres y vulnerables. La reforma del sistema de salud deberá brindar acceso a servicios de salud asequibles y de buena calidad para todos, y no avanzar una agenda que promueva el aborto en nuestro país. Una reforma verdadera al sistema de salud está siendo obstaculizada por los que insisten en revertir la política que ha tenido amplio apoyo de no financiar abortos con fondos federales, y no por aquellos que simplemente luchan por preservar esas protecciones aceptadas hace mucho tiempo.

- El 7 de noviembre, la Cámara de Representantes aprobó una importante reforma del sistema de salud que reafirma la política esencial, con amplio respaldo desde hace mucho tiempo, de rehusar fondos federales para abortos electivos; el proyecto incluye medidas positivas en cuanto a la asequibilidad y sobre los inmigrantes.
- El 24 de diciembre, el Senado rechazó esta política y aprobó una versión del proyecto que autorizaría fondos federales para ayudar a subsidiar y promover planes de salud que cubran abortos electivos. Todos los que adquieran estos planes deberán pagar los abortos de otros mediante un pago independiente destinado exclusivamente a los abortos. Y los créditos para ayudar a las familias de muy bajos ingresos a adquirir planes privados en un Health Insurance Exchange (Bolsa de Seguros Médicos) son insuficientes y dejarían a estas familias en situación de vulnerabilidad financiera.
- Fuera del contexto del aborto, ambos proyectos carecen de adecuada protección de la conciencia para los prestadores de cuidados de salud, planes o empleadores.
- Ahora los líderes del Congreso están tratando de ver de qué manera las normas de funcionamiento de la Cámara de Representantes y el Senado podrían permitir que se apruebe finalmente una versión modificada que logre conciliar las que votaron ambas cámaras.

ACCIÓN: Contacte a su representante y senadores hoy, por e-mail, teléfono o FAX.

- **Para enviar un correo electrónico instantáneo con un mensaje ya preparado al Congreso, vaya a www.usccb.org/action.**
- Llame a la central del Capitolio: 202-224-3121, o a las oficinas locales de su congresista. La información de contacto se halla en en los sitios web de los miembros del Congreso, en www.house.gov y www.senate.gov.

MENSAJE—CÁMARA:

“Me complace que el proyecto de ley de reforma del sistema de salud aprobado por la Cámara mantenga la política contra el financiamiento federal del aborto que se ha venido respaldando por mucho tiempo. En cambio, las disposiciones sobre financiamiento del aborto en el actual proyecto del ley del Senado, no modificado, tienen defectos graves y son inaceptables. Le pido que trabaje a favor de mantener estas disposiciones esenciales contra el financiamiento de abortos, por incluir plena protección de conciencia y garantizar que los servicios de salud sean accesibles y asequibles para todos. Le exhorto a que, a menos que se reúnan estos criterios, se oponga al proyecto final”.

MENSAJE—SENADO:

“Estoy profundamente decepcionado de que el proyecto de reforma de salud que fue aprobado por el Senado sin modificaciones, no mantuviera la política aceptada por mucho tiempo contra el financiamiento federal del aborto ni incluyera adecuada protección de conciencia. Le pido que apoye disposiciones esenciales contra el financiamiento de abortos, similares a las contenidas en el proyecto aprobado por la Cámara. Incluya la plena protección de conciencia y garantice que los servicios de salud sean accesibles y asequibles para todos. Le exhorto a que, a menos que se reúnan estos criterios, se oponga al proyecto final”.

¿CUÁNDO?: Las votaciones en la Cámara de Representantes podrán ser en cualquier momento.

¡Actúe hoy! ¡Gracias!