



Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities

3211 FOURTH STREET NE • WASHINGTON DC 20017-1194

202-541-3070 • FAX 202-541-3054 • EMAIL PROLIFE@USCCB.ORG • WEB WWW.USCCB.ORG/PROLIFE

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Dear Representative/Senator:

As Congress begins the appropriations process for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, many bishop committees within the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) are engaging on appropriations matters under their purview. Together, these views represent the breadth of concern of the bishops in the budget and appropriations process. I write on behalf of the USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities.

Each year, the USCCB works with Congress to advance many of our common goals through the annual appropriations process, including through funding that supports the poor, migrants and refugees, environmental protection, healthcare, housing, nutrition, and other safety net programs which help people meet their most basic needs. These goals are necessary for human flourishing and essential to the dignity of the human person and the common good. We will continue to support these goals and to advocate for you to do so as well. We also strongly hold that any work that aims at ensuring justice and flourishing for every human being cannot be separated from the protection of unborn lives.

The USCCB is gravely concerned about the prospect of any expansion of taxpayer funding of abortion, which would occur if the Hyde Amendment or any of the other life-saving appropriations riders were to be removed from the annual appropriations bills. It is vital that the Hyde Amendment and all the related life-saving appropriations riders remain in place during the 117th Congress and beyond. **The USCCB will oppose any bill that expands taxpayer funding of abortion, including any appropriations bill.**

We take this stand because abortion is not healthcare; it is the antithesis of healthcare. And as Pope Francis stated, “I ... appeal to all politicians, regardless of their faith convictions, to treat the defense of the lives of those who are about to be born and enter into society as the cornerstone of the common good.” And further, “Their killing in huge numbers ... undermines ... justice [and] compromise[es] the proper solution of any other human and social issue.”¹ It is impossible to truly work against injustices like violence, racism, poverty, and other societal problems while promoting and funding the destruction of human beings in the womb.

Far from promoting “women’s health”, abortion often has disastrous effects on women’s physical and mental health. A study² examining 173,279 low-income California Medicaid

¹ <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2019-02/pope-francis-pro-life-movement-politicians-defend-life.html>

² <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/12190217/> as cited in <https://afterabortion.org/new-study-shows-abortion-death-rate-higher-than-previously-known/>.

patients found that women who had undergone abortions faced nearly double the chance of dying in the next two years. They had an 82 percent higher risk of death from accidents, and a 44 percent higher risk of death from natural causes such as cardiovascular disease. Most disturbingly, they had a 154 percent higher risk of death from suicide than if they had given birth. Recently, in Italy,³ women who had abortions had more than double the suicide rate of women who gave birth. In Finland,⁴ women who had abortions had nearly six times the suicide rate of women who had given birth to their children.

Not only are women often personally traumatized by abortion, but their partnerships are as well. The rate of marital breakups and dissolution of romantic relationships after an abortion is between 40 and 75 percent, “often related to the breakdown of intimacy and trust.”⁵ The relationship dissolution often leaves women alone to care for themselves and any other children, with far less income and resources. Thus, rather than solving a woman’s problems, abortion often compounds them.

By offering “free” abortions, the government effectively asks pregnant women in difficult circumstances to end the life of their child, as the only complete “solution” on offer to their economic difficulty in welcoming that child. To be a truly just society that works for the common good of every human being, it is essential that we embrace policies and programs that help support women with difficult pregnancies to welcome their unborn children in safety and security.

It is also worth noting that laws preventing government-funded abortion have been approved year after year by Congresses and Presidents of both parties. And while abortion continues to be a divisive issue in our country with roughly half of the country self-identifying as “pro-life” and half as “pro-choice,” the vast majority consistently ask for more protections for mothers and their unborn children, not less. A Marist poll from January of this year indicated that 76 percent of Americans believe abortion should *never* be legal, legal only under very restricted circumstances, or only in the first three months.⁶ This includes over half (55%) of those who identify as pro-choice. The same poll found that nearly 60% of Americans oppose domestic taxpayer funding of abortion and a solid 77% oppose U.S. taxpayer funding of abortion in other countries. In a separate poll, policies protecting fundamental conscience rights also garner the support of strong majorities of Americans who believe that they should not be forced to support or participate in abortion against their will, even while disagreeing on the legality and moral status of abortion.⁷

Instead of removing protections for unborn children and their mothers, as you move forward with your important work on appropriations, I urge you in the strongest possible terms

³ <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00737-019-00977-1> as reported in <https://lozierinstitute.org/new-study-elevated-suicide-rates-among-mothers-after-abortion/>.

⁴ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/8973229/> as reported in <https://lozierinstitute.org/new-study-elevated-suicide-rates-among-mothers-after-abortion/>.

⁵ <https://www.deveber.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Chap15.pdf>.

⁶ See: <http://www.kofc.org/en/resources/news-room/polls/kofc-americans-opinions-on-abortion012021.pdf>.

⁷ See: <http://www.usccb.org/about/pro-life-activities/upload/USCCB-Key-Takeaways-handout-final.pdf>.

to use the money and policies in these bills to fund and promote policies and goals that recognize and protect the dignity and sanctity of human life in all conditions and at all stages of development. We must all do better to genuinely help all women, especially the poor and marginalized, those who live in the peripheries, and those struggling with an unexpected or difficult pregnancy for any reason. This cannot be done in truth or charity if the solution we offer is to eliminate the child. Please join me in working towards a better way that gives dignity and support to women and their innocent little ones.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph F. Naumann". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small cross symbol at the beginning.

Most Reverend Joseph F. Naumann
Archbishop of Kansas City, KS
Chairman, Committee on Pro-Life Activities