



*Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities*

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May 21, 2003

Dear Representative:

You will soon consider the FY 2004 National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 1588). Joining with the Archdiocese for the Military Services, which has sent all House members its own letter on this issue, I urge you to oppose the Sanchez amendment.

The Sanchez amendment would strike from existing law a longstanding ban on the performance of abortions at military hospitals overseas. The existing ban contains exceptions for cases where the mother's life is endangered or pregnancy occurred from rape or incest. If the Sanchez amendment is adopted, our nation's fine military hospitals around the world could be compelled to perform abortions on demand.

Under the previous Administration the policy against abortions at military hospitals was lifted. Yet during that time of permissive abortion, the military was unable to find medical personnel in the armed services willing to perform abortions. This may be because men and women in the armed services are trained in the principles of the just war. They know that under no circumstances may they ever direct their attacks against the lives of non-combatants, especially against the lives of defenseless children. If the Sanchez amendment becomes law, we would treat the unborn children of our own military personnel in ways we should not treat the children of our worst enemies.

I urge you to reject this amendment, and retain current law against abortions in military hospitals.

Sincerely,

Cardinal Anthony Bevilacqua  
Archbishop of Philadelphia  
Chairman, Committee for Pro-Life Activities  
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops