



## Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities

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April 6, 2022

Dear Senator:

As Congress begins the appropriations process for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, many 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, foreign assistance, environmental protection, healthcare, housing, nutrition, and other programs which help people meet basic needs and promote the common good. These goals, which are necessary for human flourishing and essential to the dignity of the human person, cannot be separated from the protection of unborn lives.

The USCCB remains gravely concerned about continued efforts to expand 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.”<sup>1</sup> 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 study<sup>2</sup> examining 173,279 low-income California Medicaid 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

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

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

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. A 2019 study published in Italy<sup>3</sup> found women who had abortions had more than double the suicide rate of women who gave birth. In Finland,<sup>4</sup> 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.”<sup>5</sup> 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” to their economic difficulty in welcoming that child. But this is a not true support for women, and abortion is never a positive “solution.”

In our public statement, *Standing with Moms in Need*,<sup>6</sup> Archbishop Gomez, president of the USCCB, together with myself and several other chairmen of committees serving the USCCB said, “We exhort our nation to prioritize the well-being of women, children, and families with both material resources and personal accompaniment so that no woman ever feels forced to choose between her future and the life of her child.” To be a truly just society that works for the common good of every human being, it is essential that we advance 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 the majority of Americans oppose taxpayer funding of abortion. A Marist poll from January of this year<sup>7</sup> found that 54% of Americans oppose domestic taxpayer funding of abortion and a solid 73% 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.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> <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/>.

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

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

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.usccb.org/resources/statement-standing-with-moms-031522.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.kofc.org/en/resources/communications/marist-polling-slide-deck2022.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.usccb.org/about/pro-life-activities/upload/USCCB-Key-Takeaways-handout-final.pdf>.

The Hyde and Helms Amendments and related pro-life appropriations provisions, which have been enacted year after year, reflect this consensus while providing essential protections for women, their unborn children, and the conscience rights of medical professionals.

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 to use the money and policies in these bills to only 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 blue ink that reads "+ William E. Lori". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend William E. Lori  
Archbishop of Baltimore  
Chairman, Committee on Pro-Life Activities