



Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities

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Hon. Roger Wicker
555 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510

Hon. Chris Smith
2373 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

January 27, 2023

Dear Senator Wicker and Congressman Smith:

Last week, tens of thousands of Americans from across our nation gathered at the March For Life in Washington, D.C. to celebrate God’s miraculous gift of human life from its very beginning and to urge our government to respect and protect that most fundamental human right—the right to life. Those of us in attendance were joyful and grateful for the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision last year to restore the understanding that the Constitution does not provide a right to abortion. Still, the federal government’s responsibility to steward funds without conscripting taxpayers to contribute to harming the most vulnerable among us, preborn children, remains. With all of this in mind, as chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities, I write in support of your bill, the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion and Abortion Insurance Full Disclosure Act (H.R. 7, S. 62).

Protecting taxpayers from being forced to pay for abortion in violation of their conscience is a principle that has enjoyed historically broad support among Americans, regardless of their otherwise passionately divided views on the topic. It has also been life-saving: some analyses have found that limitations on federal funding of elective abortion, such as the Hyde Amendment, have saved well over two million lives.¹

That these policies have stood for over 45 years reflects decades of bipartisan agreement and the reality that most Americans believe that the federal government should not use its power to support and promote elective abortion and should not compel citizens to subsidize this violence.² The public’s opposition to taxpayer funding of abortion has also been revealed in polls to historically include majorities of women, minorities, lower-income individuals, and even many of those who describe themselves as pro-choice.

Despite all of this, congressional action is required. Each of the existing funding limitations affect only a particular funding stream, and many have to be reenacted every year in annual appropriations. This puts them – and subsequently women and their children – at risk in a polarized climate. It also puts numerous other important, positive programs at risk from being

¹ See, e.g., <https://lozierinstitute.org/addendum-to-hyde-40-analyzing-the-impact-of-the-hyde-amendment/>.

² See, e.g., <https://www.kofc.org/en/resources/communications/polls/majority-americans-still-support-abortion-limits.pdf> (with more information at <https://www.kofc.org/en/resources/communications/polls/2023-kofc-marist-poll-cross-tabs.pdf>).

caught up in unnecessary political gridlock when there are questions of impact on abortion-related funding. This can affect the health and wellbeing of those in need worst of all.

The No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act would take a modest but important step to correct these problems by making permanent and government-wide the long-standing policy of preventing federal taxpayer funding of elective abortions. The government should never fund the destruction of innocent preborn children. Rather, Congress can better serve the common good by prioritizing policies that comprehensively assist women, children, and families in need in ways that will not only encourage childbirth but make it easier to welcome and raise a new child.³ In taking up such priorities, Congress would advance a society that promotes life and hope for both preborn children and their mothers.

Ultimately, abortion is an uncompassionate response to a difficult pregnancy, one that pits a mother in crisis against her preborn child. Women and their preborn children both deserve better – they deserve all of us to stand with them, and to provide solutions that empower them both to have a positive future. I pray that God blesses your work in pursuit of such solutions, and urge your colleagues to please support the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion and Abortion Insurance Full Disclosure Act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael F. Burbidge". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge
Bishop of Arlington
Chairman, Committee on Pro-Life Activities

³ My predecessor and brother bishops provided numerous recommendations in these regards in a letter of October 2022, available at <https://www.usccb.org/resources/letter-congress-regarding-policies-support-women-and-families-october-26-2022>.