



January 14, 2026

Dear Member of Congress:

Blessings of this new year of Grace! This comes to encourage your efforts to ensure continued access to much needed health care.

There have been many recent discussions about the Hyde Amendment, the appropriations provision and principle that protects taxpayer funds from being used for elective abortion or plans that cover elective abortion. We write to stress in the strongest possible terms that Hyde is essential for health care policy that protects human dignity. Authentic health care and the protection of human life go hand in hand. There can be no compromise on these two combined values.

The Hyde Amendment has saved more than 2.5 million children from being killed by abortion in the U.S., or roughly 30,000 per year.¹ Because of its lifesaving potency, the Catholic bishops of the United States have long supported the Hyde Amendment and have consistently opposed legislation that would compromise it. This is because the deliberate destruction of pre-born human life can never be justified as part of any broader policy. Rather, authentic health care should always protect the dignity of the human person.

The federal subsidization of health insurance plans that include coverage of elective abortion, through premium tax credits, is one of the reasons why the USCCB ultimately opposed the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in 2010.² Despite certain claims at that time and today, the ACA's separate payment mechanism, established by section 1303 and enforced with varying rigor depending on the Administration, has never been enough to fulfill Hyde conditions. This is because fungible federal taxpayer dollars are still paying for the *plans* that cover abortion – contrary to Hyde – even if not specifically going toward an abortion itself.³

As Pope Leo XIV recently said, the Holy See “considers it deplorable that public resources are allocated to suppress life, rather than being invested to support mothers and families. The

¹ Michael J. New, “Hyde Saves Lives: Analyzing the Impact of the Hyde Amendment with 2025 Addendum,” Sep. 30, 2025, at <https://lozierinstitute.org/hyde-saves-lives-analyzing-the-impact-of-the-hyde-amendment-with-2025-addendum/>.

² USCCB, Office of the General Counsel, “Legal Analysis of the Provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and Corresponding Executive Order Regarding Abortion Funding and Conscience Protection,” Mar. 25, 2010, at <https://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/health-care/upload/health-care-memo-re-executive-order-final-2010-03-25-pdf-09-03-48.pdf>; see also USCCB press release, “Bishops Renew Plea To Congress And Administration To Repair Affordable Care Act,” Jun. 28, 2012, at <https://www.usccb.org/news/2012/bishops-renew-plea-congress-and-administration-repair-affordable-care-act>; USCCB, Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, “Abortion in the Affordable Care Act: Responses to Administration Claims,” Sep. 18, 2014, at <https://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/abortion/upload/Abortion-in-the-Affordable-Care-Act-Responses-to-Administration-Claims-GAO.pdf>.

³ See *ibid.*



primary objective must remain the protection of every unborn child and the effective and concrete support of every woman so that she is able to welcome life.”⁴

In October, prior to the expiration of the ACA Enhanced Premium Tax Credits, the bishops urged Congress⁵ to extend the credits but said the credits “must not continue to fund plans that cover the destruction of human life, which is antithetical to authentic health care.” We wish to emphasize what we wrote then: “It is unacceptable for any individual in this country to forgo receiving needed care because they cannot afford it. It is also unacceptable to compel taxpayers to subsidize plans that cover abortions. These issues should not be at odds with one another.”

We continue to urge Congress to work creatively to enact legislation that ensures access to authentic, life-affirming care, and does not compromise the dignity of the human person. The Hyde Amendment principle must be fully applied to any policy in your efforts to ensure that persons get the authentic health care they need.

We stand ready to support you in your efforts to achieve this and assure you of our prayers and encouragement.

Sincerely yours in Christ Jesus,

Most Reverend Shelton J. Fabre
Archbishop of Louisville
Chairman, Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development

Most Reverend Daniel E. Thomas
Bishop of Toledo
Chairman, Committee on Pro-Life Activities

⁴ Address of Pope Leo XIV to Members of the Diplomatic Corps Accredited to the Holy See, Friday, 9 January 2026, at <https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/speeches/2026/january/documents/20260109-corpo-diplomatico.html>.

⁵ USCCB Letter to Congress, October 10, 2025, at https://www.usccb.org/resources/Letter_ACA_tax_credits_10.2025.pdf