

MEMORANDUM

From: FRC Action President Tony Perkins
To: Members of Congress, Congressional Staff
Subject: Response to Planned Parenthood memo to Hill Staff on FRC Action Ads
Date: July 30, 2009

Fact 1) In a disingenuous news release, the abortion organization known as Planned Parenthood accuses FRC of misleading the public with our recent ad, charging that it falsely claims that the health care bills will lead to an abortion mandate.

As Planned Parenthood is well aware, our claim is correct for several reasons.

First, if they were honest, Planned Parenthood would acknowledge they have admitted numerous times that they believe any health care reform include abortion. They most notably made this assertion in a November 2008 “wish list,” where they wrote: “Comprehensive benefits must include access to the full range of reproductive health services, including contraception, maternity care, and abortion care.”

Second, Planned Parenthood also says that abortion would be covered like any other health medical procedure; however, they mislead in saying it would be based on the decision of medical experts. Actually, under the current plan being debated in the House, the decision would be made by bureaucrats, not medical experts, through either an Advisory Council or the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Third, government financing of abortion has always been funded unless explicitly excluded. Indeed, in 1977 the government funded more than 300,000 abortions before the implementation of the Hyde Amendment, which bars federal funds from paying for domestic abortions. Case law surrounding the implementation of the Hyde Amendment makes clear that even though congressionally mandated exclusions are constitutional, without such exclusions abortion would be covered.

The question is whether the current Senate and House legislation would fund or mandate abortion, and the answer is yes unless there is an explicit exclusion. The fact that the Hyde Amendment is currently renewed in an annual appropriations bill does not mean it will be kept in the future (Planned Parenthood itself has organized fundraising campaigns seeking to overturn the Hyde Amendment.) Additionally, both bills self-appropriate funds and thereby bypass annual appropriation bills and thus the Hyde Amendment. When attempts were made in the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee and in two different House committees to ensure that abortion is neither funded nor mandated, the majority of Democrats in each committee voted against disallowing funding or mandates on abortion. If the authors of these bills don’t think they fund abortion, why prohibit a provision that says that?

Fact 2) Planned Parenthood also claims we neglect to recognize their assertion that more than 90 percent of the care they provide is not abortion related. Even if their claim is valid, Planned

Parenthood remains the leading abortion organization in the country. Moreover, Planned Parenthood conveniently neglects noting that they receive almost one-third of their clinic income from abortion. FRC opposes taxpayer funding for abortion or mandating abortion, and more than 71 percent of Americans agree. Planned Parenthood performs almost 300,000 abortions per year, roughly one-quarter of abortions performed in the United States.

Fact 3) Planned Parenthood claims that since the majority of private plans cover abortion, preventing such plans from covering abortion if they enter the government-run Exchange (authorized in Title II of Division A in H.R. 3200), would be a change in current abortion policy. In truth, adding such abortion exclusions would keep the status quo, since the federal government currently does not fund or subsidize elective abortion. There is precedent for such exclusions in the Federal Employee Health Benefits (FEHB) program. The FEHB, which offers federal employees a menu of health insurance providers, prevents inclusion of any plan that offers abortion coverage. Likewise, the State Children's Health Insurance Program which provides funding to states for children's health services also prevents inclusion of any plan that offers abortion coverage. Planned Parenthood hopes to change the status quo by using the health care reform debate to increase the number of abortions, and subsequently their profit margins, by having the procedure mandated or subsidized by the government.

This debate is not about the legality of abortion, but whether the Federal government should fund or subsidize abortion services. It does not now, and it should not in the future.

Fact 4) Finally, Planned Parenthood cites a poll by The Mellman Group, Inc., that claims that Americans do not support health care reform if it does not include "reproductive health care, including abortion." If this poll is to be trusted, doesn't it raise the question of why Planned Parenthood is saying the current legislation they support does not include abortion? The Mellman poll also claims that after hearing questions on health care and abortion, 66 percent support its inclusion even though the question they asked included abortion AND miscarriage.

The respondents were read from the following: "There are many medical reasons why women need abortions, including high-risk pregnancies that endanger the mother's life and miscarriages. Only women and their doctors should make these difficult medical decisions, not Congress. Politicians should not play politics with women's health by singling out abortion in an otherwise comprehensive health care reform plan." A response concerning high-risk pregnancies, abortion and miscarriage is not relevant to the issue of elective abortion or whether Congress should subsidize elective abortion. This is a sham poll the results of which are quite different from the November 2008 Zogby poll that found once again that 71 percent of Americans oppose a bill that would force employers to provide health insurance to their employees that pays for abortions.

As it currently sits, the health care legislation being pushed through Congress does not exclude abortion funding, nor does it exclude any benefit mandates that would compel private insurance to cover abortion. Amendments to exclude abortion funding and abortion mandates from the legislation would resolve the issue once and for all. One wonders why Planned Parenthood won't simply agree with us to insert such simple language into the legislation.