



# PRO-LIFE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

*An overview of events occurring 2017-2020*

To date, the administration of President Donald Trump has taken significant action to protect life and human dignity:

## 2017

On January 23, President Trump reinstated and expanded the [Mexico City Policy](#), which blocks funding for international organizations that perform or promote abortion. This new program is known as Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance (PLGHA), which now covers \$8.8 billion in family planning and global health funds that go to organizations abroad (none of whom may perform or promote abortion).

## 2018

On January 19, the Center for Medicaid and CHIP Services (CMCS) rescinded an Obama administration letter that restricted states' flexibility in [removing abortion providers from federal healthcare programs](#) if they did not meet the state's qualification standards.

On September 24, the U.S. Department off Health and Human Services (HHS) [terminated a \\$15,900 contract](#) with Advanced Bioscience Resources to procure fetal tissue from aborted babies for research. The termination of this contract led HHS to announce an audit of all acquisitions and research involving human fetal tissue to ensure consistency with statutes and regulations.

## 2019

On January 18, HHS notified California that its law requiring pregnancy resource centers to post notices about how to obtain an abortion [violated the pro-life Weldon and Coates-Snowe Amendments](#). This marks the first time that the Conscience and Religious Freedom Division at HHS found a state in violation of these laws. This demonstrates the administration's commitment to enforcing conscience protections and its pro-life priorities.

On January 19, at the request of 169 members of Congress and 49 senators, President Trump sent a letter to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi in which he promised to veto any legislation that [weakens current pro-life Federal policies and laws](#). This letter was a message to the new Democrat majority in the House that longstanding pro-life protections like the Hyde Amendment and safeguards protecting the conscience rights of health care providers are not negotiable.



On February 22, HHS finalized a new regulation governing the [\*\*Title X family planning program\*\*](#). Consistent with federal law, these rule changes known as the *Protect Life Rule* ensured that Title X clinics would be financially and physically separate from abortion facilities and would not refer patients for abortions. Since the implementation of the rule, Planned Parenthood and several pro-abortion states voluntarily decided to withdraw from the program rather than stop performing abortions.

On May 2, HHS issued a new regulation to expand the structure in which federal conscience protections related to abortion are enforced. In 2011, President Obama issued a rule that enforced only three federal conscience provisions. The new regulation under President Trump covers 25 existing statutes, which will be enforced by the new [\*\*Conscience and Religious Freedom Division\*\*](#), part of the HHS OCR.

On May 5, at the World Health Assembly, the Trump administration issued a joint statement on behalf of the United States and eight other nations calling on other countries to join an effort to focus on women's health issues that unify rather than create dissension among members (like abortion and sexual and reproductive health). This statement was the first action taken under the administration's new [\*\*Protecting Life in Global Health Policy\*\*](#) (PLGHP), which seeks to build a global coalition to promote women's health while also protecting unborn life and strengthening the family. This policy works in conjunction with the Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance (PLGHA) program, which restricts funding for organizations abroad that perform or promote abortion.

On June 5, after an extensive [\*\*audit into fetal tissue research\*\*](#), the Trump administration announced a major change in the enforcement of research contracts. HHS would no longer conduct intramural (internal) research using tissue from aborted babies and would greatly increase the ethics rules and safeguards that govern extramural (external) fetal tissue research contracts. All new external contracts will be subject to a congressionally authorized ethics advisory board, making it much more difficult for fetal tissue research contracts to be awarded by the National Institute of Health.

On July 18, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and HHS Secretary Alex Azar issued a joint letter on International Partnerships that called states to join a [\*\*coalition of countries that seek to advocate against pro-abortion policies\*\*](#) at the World Health Organization and the United Nations (UN).

On August 28, the HHS OCR issued a notice of violation to the University of Vermont Medical Center for [\*\*forcing a nurse to participate in an abortion despite a conscience objection\*\*](#). This marks the third time that the HHS Religious Freedom Division under President Trump has investigated a conscience complaint related to participating in or promoting abortion.

On September 25, HHS Secretary Alex Azar delivered a statement at the UN General Assembly [\*\*stating that there is no international right to abortion\*\*](#), and that the U.S. does not support ambiguous terms like "sexual and reproductive health" in UN documents.

On November 14, the U.S. government lead a statement on behalf of itself and 10 other countries at the Nairobi Summit, once again calling upon the international community to focus on areas of consensus instead of [\*\*divisive issues like abortion and sexual and reproductive health\*\*](#).

# 2020

On December 20, the center for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a final regulation to [\*\*address the abortion surcharge\*\*](#) hidden in many plans purchased on the Obamacare exchange. This final rule aligns federal regulations with section 1303 of the Affordable Care Act, ensuring that consumers know their health care plan covers abortion and that funding for abortion is kept separate from all other covered services.

On January 16, HHS Secretary Alex Azar hosted 34 countries for a meeting on how to [\*\*promote women's health and protect the lives of the unborn\*\*](#). This meeting followed an invitation sent by Secretary Azar and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to 70 different countries inviting them to join a coalition to oppose international efforts to enshrine abortion as a human right.

On January 22, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services at HHS approved a family planning waiver for Texas to implement a [\*\*state-run Medicaid program that excludes abortion providers\*\*](#) like Planned Parenthood. This makes Texas the first state to receive Medicaid funding for a family planning program that does not include abortion providers.

On January 24, President Trump became [\*\*the first sitting president to give remarks in person\*\*](#) at the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C. In his address he stated the eternal truth that every child is a sacred gift from God and reiterated his effort to defend the dignity and sanctity of every human life.

Also on January 24, HHS Secretary Alex Azar announced live at Family Research Council's ProLifeCon event that HHS issued [\*\*a notice of violation to California for violating the federal Weldon Amendment\*\*](#) by mandating all health insurers provide coverage for abortion. California's abortion coverage mandate has deprived over 28,000 residents of plans that do not cover abortion. This marks the second time that HHS has issued a notice of violation to California for violating federal conscience laws and is the fourth enforcement action taken by the HHS OCR's Conscience and Religious Freedom Division.

On February 4, during his State of the Union address, President Trump called on Congress to pass legislation that would ban late-term abortions. To highlight the need for this legislation, he invited special guest Ellie Schneider, who was [\*\*born at just 21 weeks gestation\*\*](#).

On February 25, OMB issued a Statement of Administrative Policy [\*\*strongly supporting two pro-life bills\*\*](#) being voted on in the U.S. Senate: the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act and the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act. Had Congress passed these bills, the president's advisors would have recommended that he sign both into law.

On March 28, amid the coronavirus pandemic, HHS OCR issued a strong statement reminding health care entities of their obligation to [\*\*treat persons with disabilities with the same dignity and worth as everyone else\*\*](#). OCR reiterated its duty to enforce current civil rights laws and has already worked with states like Alabama and Pennsylvania to remove discriminatory practices from their pandemic health plans.

On May 18, USAID Acting Administrator John Barsa [\*\*sent a letter\*\*](#) to the UN Secretary General advocating that the UN not push abortion during the coronavirus crisis. Barsa noted that abortion is not an "essential service," and there are many actual health needs at this time. Therefore, the United States, which



stands with the international pro-life community under the Trump administration, does not look kindly on these efforts to promote abortion.

On June 26, OCR resolved a [complaint against Tennessee](#) after the state updated its medical triage plans to prevent discrimination against the elderly and disabled when medical resources are scarce. This is now OCR's fourth resolution, previously resolving cases with Alabama, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania.

On June 29, the White House released a [statement](#) condemning the Supreme Court ruling on *June Medical Services v. Russo*. This ruling concluded that requiring individuals who perform abortions to have admitting privileges at hospitals is unconstitutional.

On August 5, Vice President Mike Pence gave a speech on the importance of [protecting life](#) and reaffirmed the administration's pro-life positions. He also became the first vice president to visit a pregnancy resource center – these centers are valuable lifelines that offer abortion-free services for women facing crisis pregnancies.

On August 17, the State Department, in coordination with other federal agencies, released a second review of [President Trump's PLGHA Policy](#), which requires U.S. global health funds recipients to certify that they will not promote or perform abortions. This report reaffirmed the policy's effectiveness and the U.S. government's ability to simultaneously protect unborn life and promote better health outcomes for women globally.

On August 18, the Human Fetal Tissue Research Ethics Advisory Board—which was convened as a part of President Trump's June 5, 2019 fetal tissue research policy—issued recommendations on the [ethics of fetal tissue research proposals](#). The board recommended against funding 13 of the 14 proposals because of ethical concerns with how fetal tissue from aborted babies would be used. This board will continue to review any new fetal tissue research proposals applying for federal funds.

On September 14, The Trump administration proposed a new regulation to apply the Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance (PLGHA) policy to contracts and subcontracts. This regulation ensures that more foreign organizations must certify they will not [perform or promote abortions](#) in order to receive government aid. The Trump administration had identified a loophole in which foreign organizations performing or promoting abortions were still contracting with the United States for global health programs. This unprecedented expansion further solidifies the administration's commitment to protecting life abroad.

On September 25, President Trump signed an executive order that reinforces existing protections for children born prematurely, with disabilities, or in medical distress, including [infants who survive abortion](#). This order, which clarifies the enforcement of existing laws and prioritizes medical screenings for vulnerable infants, was in response to Congress's inaction to pass meaningful legal protections for infants that survive abortion.

On October 22, HHS Secretary Alex Azar and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo hosted the [Geneva Consensus Declaration](#) signing ceremony. This declaration is a historic effort by the governments of the United States, Brazil, Egypt, Hungary, Indonesia, and Uganda to strengthen global initiatives that promote women's health, preserve human life (including the unborn), strengthen the family, and protect national sovereignty.



For educational and informational purposes only.  
FRC does not endorse or oppose any candidate for public office.



Call us at 1-877-372-2808 or visit online at [frcaction.org](http://frcaction.org)