

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 28, 2009

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232 Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Louise Slaughter
Chairwoman, Rules Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
H-312 Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Chairwoman Slaughter:

We urge you to allow Members of the House to vote their consciences with regard to abortion and health care reform by allowing consideration of an amendment to prohibit government funding of abortion, to be offered by Congressmen Bart Stupak and Joe Pitts.

Proposed health reform legislation, H.R. 3200, America's Affordable Health Choices Act, radically departs from the current federal government policy of not paying for elective abortion or subsidizing plans that cover abortion. None of the bills reported out of the three committees of jurisdiction have addressed our serious concerns about public funding for abortion. The version that was approved by the House Energy and Commerce Committee, containing the Capps Amendment, actually explicitly authorizes the federal government (the Department of Health and Human Services) to directly fund elective abortions, with federal (public) funds drawn on a federal Treasury account. Widely circulated claims that these would be "private" funds are misleading; they are contrary to law and the until-now universal understanding of what constitutes federal funds. The simple fact is that under the Capps language, the U.S. Treasury will be permitted to issue checks to abortion clinics to reimburse for abortion on demand for the first time in decades.

The bill also explicitly provides for government subsidies to pay the premiums for private insurance policies that include elective abortion coverage. This, too, is a drastic break from longstanding federal policy. The Hyde Amendment has, for over 30 years, prevented programs funded by the annual Health and Human Services Appropriations bill from financing abortion. However, H.R. 3200 bypasses the annual appropriations bills and directly appropriates funding for both the public option and the affordability credits. This means the Hyde amendment will not apply to the public option or to the premium subsidy program created by H.R. 3200. In two memos (attached), the Congressional Research Service has confirmed that these programs will not require any future appropriations. In addition, legislation of this magnitude should include permanent language to ensure that federal funds are not used to support abortion.

Under current law, direct federal funding of abortion is prohibited, with narrow exceptions, and federal subsidies are also prohibited from flowing into trust funds or insurance plans that cover elective abortion. All of the existing government health care programs, including Medicaid, the State Children's Health Insurance Plan, the Department of Defense health programs, the Federal Employees Health Benefits

Program, and others, are prohibited by congressional enactments from covering abortion (except to save the life of the mother, or in cases of rape or incest). This reflects the position that the U.S. government should not be in the business of promoting abortion as health care. Real health care is about saving and nurturing life, not about taking life.

We respectfully request that the Rules Committee report a rule that allows all Members of the U.S. House of Representatives the right to vote their conscience on an amendment offered by Congressmen Stupak and Pitts regarding government funding for abortion. Thank you for your time and consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Rout Stupak

by Pitts PA-16

Kathleen A. Dahlke

Chris Smith

H. E. Bonior

Jean Schmidt

Jim Oberstar

John Fleming

Colli C. Pelam

Nichelle Bachmann

Jim Oberstar (TN-4)

David P. Roe

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Bill Cassidy

Foy Blunt

Jim McDermott

Jerry Moran

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Markus Haller

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Tom Peter

Pete Hockett

Samuel Hockett UT-3

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Scott Garrett NJ-05

Ji Jordan OH-4

Steve Kurtz OH-7

Eric Lipton MN-03

Jack Sprague GA-1

Kevin Cramer TX-1

Kenny Wood

Tommy Carter

Gene Sawyer

Bob Whitman

Jim Miller

Al Sawyer to 26

John Klein MN-2

Frank Sawyer OK-3

Joe Barton

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Cliff Stearns

Zee Wang

Michael OB

Nathan Deal

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Tim Murphy

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Gus M. Belarbi

Blaine Luntkamp

Cliff Borsari Jr

Bill Shuster

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Virginia Foxx

Sam Johnson

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Cathy McMoran-Rodgers

Robert B. Aderholt

Steve King

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Quinn Hunt

Ron Paul

JOE Wilson

Carlson

Vern Buchanan

Philie Wilson

Lee Myrick

Jane Camp

Paul C Brown

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Paul Ryan

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Steve Perry

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Dy Waden

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Connie Mack

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Kevin McCarthy

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