

Support the Nelson-Hatch-Casey Amendment to Stop Abortion Funding in Health Care Reform!

The full Senate is considering their health care reform bill. The bishops are strongly urging the Senate to incorporate essential changes to the Senate's health care reform bill to ensure that needed health care reform legislation truly protects the life, dignity, consciences and health of all. **The amendment to maintain the prohibition on federal funding of abortion could be voted on as early as Monday, December 7. Please contact your Senators today!**

Senators Ben Nelson (D-NE) , Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and Robert Casey (D-PA) have submitted an amendment that like the Stupak amendment that was included in the final House bill, prevents this legislation from mandating abortion coverage or providing federal funds for coverage that includes elective abortions. Those wishing to purchase abortion coverage may continue to do so with their own private funds, but not in the government-run health care plan ("community health insurance option") or with the help of federal subsidies.

Senate: On November 18, Senate leadership unveiled its health care reform bill, The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. This bill has been brought to the floor by inserting its text into H.R. 3590, an unrelated House-passed tax measure. Debate and votes have begun and may continue until the Christmas recess.

In a November 20 letter to the U.S. Senate, the U.S. bishops urged essential changes in the Senate bill: to retain federal policy on abortion funding and conscience protection; to protect access to health care for immigrants; and to provide for adequate affordability and coverage standards. The bishops said: "Sadly, the legislative proposal recently unveiled in the Senate does not meet these moral criteria." The bishops specifically said that if the bill's serious defects on abortion are not corrected, "the current legislation should be opposed."

ACTION: Contact Members now through e-mail, phone calls or FAX letters. 1) Send an e-mail at www.usccb.org/action. 2) Call the U.S. Capitol switchboard at: 202-224-3121, or call your Members' local offices. Full contact info can be found on Members' web sites at www.house.gov and www.senate.gov.

MESSAGE—SENATE: "Please support the Nelson-Hatch-Casey Amendment to uphold longstanding policies against abortion funding, and please protect conscience rights in health care reform.

WHEN: Senate floor debate on the amendment may begin the week of December 7.

WATCH FOR ADDITIONAL ACTION ALERTS! As the Senate continues to consider amendments to the health care bill on abortion funding, conscience protections, improving affordability and coverage and protecting immigrants' health care, the USCCB will send Action Alerts to update you on advocacy needed to support health care legislation that protects the life and dignity of all people from conception until natural death.

For more information, please visit www.usccb.org/healthcare -- Thank you for your advocacy!