

No Taxpayer Funds for Abortion!

Abortion is unique among ethical violations. It is a particularly grave offense because of the complete innocence of the victim and the usual consent and active participation of those who have a sacred duty to protect the life of the child. Doctors and nurses are called to a higher ethical standard than most professionals. Committing abortions is a perversion of medicine and the polar opposite of their mission to heal and preserve human life.

The Church has marked the special nature of abortion by decreeing that anyone who freely and actively participates in a successful abortion incurs automatic, or *latae sententiae*, [excommunication](#). This penalty is meant to help the faithful realize the gravity of the sin, to repent, and to come back to the moral path of salvation. Those who are forced to have an abortion by others are not excommunicated, but it does apply to those who make the abortion possible, for example, by driving the mother to the place where it will be carried out or by paying for it. In other words, immediate material cooperation with abortion also leads to excommunication. Remote material cooperation with abortion through taxpayer funding of this sin obviously does not lead to excommunication, but it is a grave concern that must be fought and protested.

I am led to write on this topic by a dreadful political development. President Joe Biden and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, both baptized Catholics, are leading an attempt to remove the Hyde Amendment from legislation that will enact the U.S. federal budget. The Hyde Amendment has stood with bipartisan support for over forty years as a ban on any federal funding for nearly all abortions. Before it went into effect, an estimated 300,000 abortions a year in the USA were paid for using [taxpayer funds!](#)

There is a fundamental ethical principle at stake in this issue. Coercion has no place in the intrinsically evil act of abortion. Forcing taxpayers to support abortion financially is a grave ethical violation. At one time, politicians saw this extreme act as self-degrading even if they generally supported legalized abortion. That was the case with Joe Biden when he was a U.S. senator up until his most recent run for president. It shows how radical the allies of abortion-on-demand activists have become that they are now trying to eliminate the consensus-supported ban on taxpayer funded abortions.

All Catholics and all persons of good will must act. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Pro-Life Activities Committee, on which I am honored to serve as a consultant, is leading the charge. Go to www.notaxpayerabortion.com and sign on to send a message that hopefully millions of Americans will also send to express their outrage at this attempted ethical betrayal by the president and the congressional Democratic Party leadership.

Together we can stop this and save the Hyde Amendment. Without the existing Hyde Amendment and related bans on taxpayer funds for abortions, [billions of our dollars](#) would have facilitated abortions over the years throughout the USA and abroad. An estimated 2.4 million children were not aborted in the USA alone thanks to the Hyde protections. It is urgent that we act quickly because the budget legislation stripped of the Hyde protections will come before Congress in June.

I issue this call to action because as a Catholic and a bioethicist leading The National Catholic Bioethics Center (NCBC) this is what my conscience directs me to do. The NCBC is not a partisan or activist organization. Our mission is to help the Church, both clergy and lay faithful, to make the best ethical choices possible when faced with moral dilemmas. Our usual work involves advising Catholic health care ministries and health professionals, as well as our bishops, about how to interpret and apply the *Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services* (ERDs). Our educational initiatives regularly focus on our expertise with the ERDs as well.

An issue as important as preserving the Hyde Amendment, however, simply “cries out to heaven,” to use a biblical phrase. There are times when academic reserve is not an adequate ethical response, even for a venerable institution like the NCBC. Our organization makes a point of lending its support to the U.S. bishops, who have steadfastly reaffirmed, in the face of criticism, that “*The [threat of abortion](#) remains our preeminent priority because it directly attacks life itself, because it takes place within the sanctuary of the family, and because of the number of lives destroyed.*”

Please join me in signing at www.notaxpayerabortion.com and speaking out on this issue which involves the dignity of all human lives, both born and unborn.