



FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE

# ACTION ALERT

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## Stop Abortion Funding in Health Care Reform!

Both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate have passed health care reform bills. The two chambers need to agree on a final bill. It is not clear how this will be achieved. Congressional leadership has temporarily delayed further action while discussions continue.

House: On November 7, during floor debate on the Affordable Health Care for America Act (H.R. 3962), the House approved, 240 to 193, the Stupak-Pitts Amendment, to enact a permanent ban on federal funding of elective abortions or health plans that include such abortions. The House then narrowly passed H.R. 3962.

Senate: On December 8, during floor debate on the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (H.R. 3590), the Senate voted to table the Nelson-Hatch-Casey Amendment, 54-yes, 45-no, a measure similar to the Stupak-Pitts Amendment. On Christmas Eve, the Senate passed H.R. 3590. The bill requires federal funds to help subsidize and promote health plans that cover elective abortions. All purchasers of such plans will be required to pay for other people's abortions through a separate payment solely to pay for abortion.

Outside the abortion context, neither bill has adequate conscience protection for health care providers, plans or employers.

The U.S. Catholic bishops continue to make the moral case that genuine health care reform must maintain the longstanding policy against federal funding of abortion, include full conscience protection and assure that health care is accessible and affordable for all. If these criteria are not met, the final bill must be opposed. Please contact your Representative and Senators today!

**ACTION:** Contact your Representatives and Senators today by e-mail, phone or FAX.

- Send an e-mail through NCHLA's Grassroots Action Center at: [www.nchla.org/actiondisplay.asp?ID=279](http://www.nchla.org/actiondisplay.asp?ID=279).
- Call the U.S. Capitol switchboard at: 202-224-3121, or call your Members' local offices. Contact info can be found on Members' web sites at: [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov) and [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov).

**MESSAGE—HOUSE:** "I am pleased that the House health care bill maintains the longstanding policy against federal funding of abortion. I urge you to work to uphold essential provisions against abortion funding, to include full conscience protection and to assure that health care is accessible and affordable for all. Until and unless these criteria are met, I urge you to oppose the final bill."

**MESSAGE—SENATE:** "I am deeply disappointed that the Senate health care bill fails to maintain the longstanding policy against federal funding of abortion and does not include adequate protection for conscience. I urge you to support essential provisions against abortion funding, similar to those in the House bill. Include full conscience protection and assure that health care is accessible and affordable for all. Until and unless these criteria are met, I urge you to oppose the final bill."

**WHEN:** It is not clear when the House and Senate will next act on a bill. Please make your voice heard as the debate goes forward! Thanks!

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