

JOSEPH R. BIDEN, JR.
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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

December 26, 1977

Dear Delawarean:

Since the Congress has again taken up the question of federal funding for abortions, I thought you would be interested in a summary of these recent actions.

As you probably already know, the Senate and the House of Representatives finally agreed on language dealing with the problem of medicaid-covered abortions December 15. The 1977 fiscal year appropriations bill prohibited the use of federal funds to pay for abortions, "...unless the life of the mother is in danger." This is the position which I have consistently supported.

During consideration of the 1978 fiscal year appropriation bill for the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, the House again passed this same language. The Senate, however, passed a broader definition of the circumstances under which medicaid funds could be used to pay for an abortion. I did not support this version.

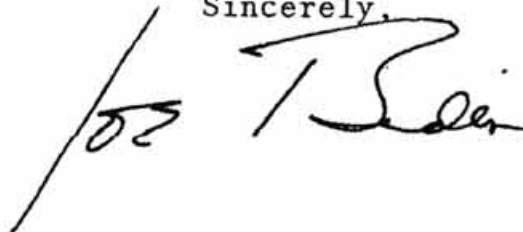
The language that the Senate and House finally agreed to (after five months of debate) will protect both the woman and her unborn child. The agreement prohibits the use of any funds in the bill to pay for abortions unless continued pregnancy would endanger the mother's life, or in the opinion of two doctors, cause "severe and long lasting physical health damage."

The bill, however, also provides funding for "medical procedures" to victims of rape and incest if the offences have been promptly reported to police or to a public health agency.

January 23 is the date of the 1978 "March for Life". Again, arrangements have been made for you to meet with your Congressional representatives similar to last year. The meeting will be held in room 1318 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building at 3:00 p.m.

Looking forward to having the opportunity of meeting with you on the 23rd of January.

Sincerely,

/02 Biden

CC ALL ✓
MM
CB
MR

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0802

April 7, 1994

Mr. Michael Gregg
P.O. Box 30170
Wilmington, DE 19805

Dear Mr. Gregg:

Thank you for your postcard on health care reform and abortion services. You say in your postcard that most Americans don't want to pay for abortion services and ask, "Please don't force me to pay for abortions against my conscience." I agree with you.

At this time, with a number of health care reform proposals on the table and a long debate ahead, there is no way to know the form that the final legislation will take, or what amendments may be offered. However, I will continue to abide by the same principle that has guided me throughout my 21 years in the Senate: those of us who are opposed to abortion should not be compelled to pay for them. As you may know, I have consistently -- on no fewer than 50 occasions -- voted against federal funding of abortions.

The present debate over health care reform raises for the first time the question of whether the federal government should decide for everyone that they must buy insurance that includes abortion services, or whether individuals should have the option not to. Just as the federal government should not be in the business of telling people that they can no longer use their own money to purchase such services, the government should not tell those with strong convictions against abortion, such as you and I, that we must pay for them.

Again, thank you for writing. It is important to me to know your views as the debate on health care reform legislation proceeds.

Sincerely,



Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
United States Senator