

July 15, 2009

RE: Financial Services appropriations bill (H.R. 3170) would allow funding of elective abortion with congressionally appropriated funds

Dear Member of Congress:

The National Right to Life Committee (NRLC) urges you to vote **against passage** of the Financial Services appropriations bill (H.R. 3170), because the bill would lift a longstanding ban on the use of funds appropriated by Congress to pay for elective abortions in the District of Columbia.

For many years, the annual appropriations bill for D.C. has contained a provision (the “Dornan Amendment”) prohibiting the use of any appropriated funds to pay for abortions, except to save the life of the mother, or in cases of rape or incest. Prior to the initial adoption of the congressional ban, public funds were used to pay for over 4,000 abortions annually in the nation’s capital. If the ban is lifted, public funding of elective abortion will resume, and the predictable result will be that the number of abortions performed will increase, probably by around 1,000 per year.

At the Appropriations Committee markup on July 7, Congressmen Todd Tiahrt and Lincoln Davis offered an amendment that would have continued the longstanding pro-life policy. Regrettably, this amendment failed, 26-33, and the Rules Committee has refused to allow an amendment on the House floor to preserve the pro-life policy. **Therefore, a vote in favor of passing the bill will be reported in NRLC’s annual congressional scorecard as a vote to fund abortion on demand with funds appropriated by Congress.**

During the Appropriations Committee debate, the chairman of the Financial Services Appropriations subcommittee asserted that the bill would not “appropriate” funds for abortion, but rather, would allow the use of “local” funds for abortion. In reality, Article I of the Constitution says that Congress holds complete legislative authority over the District of Columbia (“exclusive legislation in all cases whatsoever”), and **the entire budget for the District of Columbia (including locally generated revenues) is appropriated by Congress** – which makes these funds quite different from funds raised and controlled by the sovereign states. NRLC believes that the defense of innocent human life is a matter of sufficient gravity to fully justify the exercise of Congress’s Article I power.

Respectfully submitted,



Douglas Johnson
Legislative Director