

(202) 378-8863

Date: July 29, 2020

RE: H.R. 7617 the Appropriations Omnibus

Dear Member of Congress:

This week, the House will consider H.R. 7617, the Defense, Commerce, Justice, Science, Energy and Water Development, Financial Services and General Government, Homeland Security, Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development Appropriations Act, herein *minibus #2*.

The National Right to Life Committee (NRLC) urges you to oppose H.R. 7617 as it includes several provisions that roll back current pro-life policies. NRLC will include the roll call on passage of H.R. 7617 in its scorecard of key pro-life votes of the 116th Congress.

Conscience Rights of Healthcare Providers

H.R. 7617 would block implementation and enforcement of the rule, “Protecting Statutory Conscience Rights in Health Care,” issued by the Department of Health and Human Services (84 FR 23170). That rule would enforce approximately 25 existing longstanding statutory civil rights provisions that protect health care providers from suffering discrimination if they do not participate in abortion, sterilization, or assisted suicide.

The Protect Life Rule and Title X

H.R. 7617 would block the Administration’s final rule related to pro-life changes to the Title X family planning program. Under the rule, abortion facilities may not be in the same location where family planning services are delivered. The rule also states that Title X grantees may not refer for elective abortion. The rule does not cut one dime of funding for family planning, but ensures that funding goes to health facilities that do not perform or promote abortion as family planning.

Under the Obama Administration policy (which H.R. 7617 would restore), Title X consistently funded family planning through organizations that promoted and provided abortions. H.R. 7616 would also require Title X grantees to provide information about abortion to every patient who tested positive for pregnancy. Ultimately, Planned Parenthood, rather than comply with the rule, withdrew from the program, and as a result, the organization will forgo \$60 million a year in federal funding.

Section 1557 Obamacare Rule

This past June, the Department of Health and Human Services published regulations related to Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). In 2016 when the Obama Administration issued implementing regulations, it defined “discrimination on the basis of sex” to include abortion.

If this had taken effect, it would have forced health care entities receiving federal funding to provide or pay for an abortion. This would have meant that any health care entity participating in federal health programs could have been booted out of the programs for failing to provide abortion for patients. The change is that choosing not to perform or cover abortion will not constitute discrimination under Obamacare. HHS is simply aligning the court rulings with the current rules on discrimination. H.R. 7617 would restore these Obama-era regulations.

“D.C. Hyde Amendment”

H.R. 7617 repeals the “D.C. Hyde Amendment” (sometimes called the Dornan Amendment). The “D.C. Hyde Amendment” prohibits the use of government funds to pay for abortion in the Federal District (except to save the life of the mother, or in cases of rape or incest), which for decades (with brief interruptions) has been part of the annual appropriations bill that covers the District. Published academic studies demonstrate that policies that bar tax-funded abortions actually prevent one-third or more of the abortions that would otherwise occur among the covered populations.

NRLC will include the roll call on H.R. 7617 in its scorecard of key pro-life votes of the 116th Congress. Thank you for considering NRLC’s views on this legislation.

Should you have any questions, please contact us at (202) 378-8863, or via e-mail at jpopik@nrlc.org.

Sincerely,



David N. O’Steen, Ph.D.
Executive Director



Jennifer Popik, J.D.
Legislative Director

National Right to Life Committee
202-378-8863
Federallegislation@nrlc.org