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January 2, 2019

RE: Vote No on the “Minibus Legislation to
Prevent Tax Subsidies for Abortion-Promoting Groups Overseas

Dear Member of Congress:

On January 3, 2019, the House is expected to consider the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2019 covering various federal programs, herein the minibus.

The National Right to Life Committee (NRLC) urges you to oppose the minibus, offered by Congresswoman Nita Lowry, as it includes language that would mandate U.S. subsidies to organizations that actively promote abortion in foreign nations.

The minibus contains language that would effectively overturn the current pro-life Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance program. This vital pro-life policy was originally adopted by President Reagan and announced at a 1984 population conference in Mexico City. The policy was reinstated by President’s Bush in 2001, and restored and expanded under President Trump in 2017. Under the Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance program, in order to be eligible for U.S. “population assistance, a private organization must sign a contract promising not to perform abortions (except to save the mother’s life or in cases of rape or incest), lobby to change the abortion laws of host countries, or otherwise “actively promote abortion as a method of family planning.

The most important characteristic of the Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance policy is that it establishes an eligibility criterion for U.S. funding: If a group is unwilling to agree to avoid promotion of abortion, that group will not receive any type of U.S. support. In short, the Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance Policy is not about how an organization keeps its books. Rather, it is about the type of groups the United States is going to support. If a specific organization declines to accept the policy, then the same funds are channeled to other organizations that agree to the contract. There is, therefore, no overall reduction in funding for family planning programs resulting from the Policy.

Additionally, the minibus re-establishes funding to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). In 2017, the Trump Administration used its authority under the Kemp–Kasten Amendment to withhold funding for the UNFPA due to the organization’s involvement in China’s coercive population-control policies.

NRLC will include the roll call on the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2019 in its scorecard of key pro-life votes of the 116th Congress. Thank you for considering NRLC’s views on this legislation.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of David N. O'Steen in blue ink.

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

Handwritten signature of Jennifer Popik in blue ink.

Jennifer Popik, J.D.
Legislative Director