

June 12, 2019

RE: H.R. 2740, the Appropriations Omnibus

Dear Member of Congress:

This week, the House will begin consideration of H.R. 2740, the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, Defense, State, Foreign Operations, and Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act, 2020.

The National Right to Life Committee (NRLC) urges you to oppose H.R. 2740 in its current form, as it includes several provisions that roll back current pro-life policies. *Unless the three amendments described below are adopted, NRLC will include the roll call on passage of H.R. 2740 in its scorecard of key pro-life votes of the 116th Congress.*

Conscience Rights of Healthcare Providers

H.R. 2740 would block implementation and enforcement of the recent rule, “Protecting Statutory Conscience Rights in Health Care,” issued by the Department of Health and Human Services (RIN 0945– 20 AA10). 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.

Representative Cole is expected to offer an amendment (#14) to strike this language and permit the “Protecting Statutory Conscience Rights in Health Care” rule to stand. *We urge you to vote in favor of this amendment, and will include a roll call on the Cole Amendment in our scorecard of key pro-life votes of the 116th Congress.*

The Protect Life Rule and Title X

H.R. 2740 would block the Administration’s final rule related to prolife 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. 2740 would restore), Title X consistently funded family planning through organizations that promoted and provided abortions.

Representative Roby is expected to offer an amendment (#169) to strike the language that prevents the implementation of the pro-life Title X rule. *We urge you to vote in favor of the Roby Amendment, and will include a roll call on this amendment in our scorecard of key pro-life votes of the 116th Congress.*

Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance program/Permanent repeal of Mexico City Policy

H.R. 2740 contains language that would effectively overturn the current pro-life Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance program, and further, it would create a statutory prohibition against a future Administration ever issuing a similar pro-life policy again.

This vital pro-life policy, sometimes referred to as the Mexico City Policy, was originally adopted by President Reagan and announced at a 1984 population conference in Mexico City. The policy was reinstated by President 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.

Representative Marshall is expected to offer an amendment (#79) to strike the provision that eliminates the Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance program and bars such pro-life policies in the future. *We urge you to vote in favor of the Marshall Amendment, and will include a roll call on this amendment in our scorecard of key pro-life votes of the 116th Congress.*

Unless all three of these amendments are adopted, NRLC opposes passage of H.R. 2740, and will include the roll call on passage of H.R. 2740 in its scorecard of key pro-life votes of the 116th Congress. Thank you for considering NRLC’s views on this legislation.

Sincerely,



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