



ADVANCING FAITH, FAMILY AND FREEDOM

October 20, 2015

Representative
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Family Research Council (FRC) and the hundreds of thousands of families we represent, I urge you to vote in favor of the *Restoring Americans' Healthcare Freedom Reconciliation Act*, which eliminates a significant portion of federal funding for Planned Parenthood Federation of American (PPFA) as well as several key provisions of the Patient Protection Affordable Care Act (PPACA) through the budget reconciliation process. Americans are outraged as they are made aware of what happens at abortion clinics, where life is only valued by the sum of body parts. FRC strongly supports the effort to eliminate a significant portion of PPFA's federal funding through this effort. FRC has also supported repealing the Affordable Care Act and supports several provisions contained in this bill to repeal key provisions. FRC reserves the right to score in favor of votes for the Rule and will score in favor of votes for the bill.

PPFA, despite its nonprofit status, received over \$528 million in federal, state and local government grants and contracts in 2013-2014, and reported a total revenue of over \$1.3 billion. According to a March 2015 GAO report, PPFA received \$401.29 million in reimbursements from federal-state programs such as Medicaid, CHIP and Medicare in 2012. Of that \$400.45 million was provided to PPFA through Medicaid. For 2010-2012 those three programs funded PPFA a whopping \$1.186 billion, of which 99.9% came from Medicaid.

While an effort to defund Planned Parenthood has been blocked in the Senate due to the 60 vote cloture threshold, we believe an effort to defund a significant portion of PPFA's government revenue through the reconciliation process, which is subject to a 51 vote threshold, is entirely appropriate and possible. While past efforts to defund abortion in reconciliation were subject to a Byrd rule point of order, the provision in the House bill is different. It excludes funding for certain entities.

Specifically, the House reconciliation bill will restrict for one year funding under several mandatory programs such as Medicaid to entities that receive over \$350 million and which provide abortion services, other than for cases resulting from rape or incest or cases in which the life of the mother is at risk. CBO estimates this provision would save an estimated \$235 million. The reconciliation instructions would allow funding in the amount of \$235 million to community health centers, which do not provide abortion. In essence, the Committee's reconciliation instructions would defund a significant amount of federal funds PPFA receives and redirect funding to other health centers.

Adding these defunding measures to budget reconciliation provides a way forward to defunding PPFA and passing this in the Senate with 51 votes. To avoid such an approach would diminish much of the effort Members in the House and Senate have engaged in so far to defund PPFA.

This bill would also repeal key provisions of the PPACA which have the effect of threatening life-saving treatment, which encourage subsidies for abortion coverage and which threaten conscience. Specifically, the bill would repeal the Independent Payment Advisory Board which is established to control health care costs but which will result in government rationing of lifesaving care.

The bill also would repeal the employer mandate and its penalties, thereby allowing employers to offer health care plans to their employees that are pro-life and avoid dropping their employees into exchange plans which may cover elective abortion. Moreover, repealing the employer mandate grants employers the option to forgo health care coverage and thereby escape the HHS preventive care services mandate, sometimes called the “contraception mandate”, in which all employers offering group coverage must provide drugs and devices that can cause abortion in violation against their conscience. While the Supreme Court protected closely held businesses in the *Hobby Lobby* case, non-profit employers such as the Little Sisters of the Poor and numerous other employers are still subject to the HHS mandate. Employers should not be forced by the federal government to cover health insurance that violate their conscience.

Last, the bill would repeal the individual mandate, allowing individuals to refuse to purchase insurance where there are no or few pro-life alternatives. This is especially relevant for individuals who live in 26 states that did not opt out of elective abortion coverage. Currently, of the 25 states that allow abortion coverage (and which the federal government may subsidize), 4 states have no pro-life plans, and in 9 states 90% of the plans cover elective abortion. Under the PPACA, those purchasing plans with elective abortion must pay an abortion surcharge, and the federal government subsidizes such plans in violation of the long-standing Hyde Amendment. Pro-life individuals in these states should have more options. The abortion funding schemes in the PPACA would still need to be addressed. However, repealing the individual mandate removes penalties that force people to purchase health plans they find objectionable as it relates to abortion coverage.

For these reasons, FRC supports the *Restoring Americans’ Healthcare Freedom Reconciliation Act*. Again, FRC reserves the right to score in favor of votes for the Rule and will score in favor of votes for the bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Christensen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small horizontal line above the "i" in "Christensen".

David Christensen
Vice President of Government Affairs