

This notice is also an official public policy announcement of the Roman Catholic Church in the State of Hawaii.

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#### Issue Update

### Healthcare Reform Update and Overview

Congress is working on three main health care reform bills—one in the House, two in the Senate.

House: On July 17, the Committees on Education and Labor and on Ways and Means favorably reported the America's Affordable Health Choices Act (H.R. 3200), after rejecting amendments to exclude mandated coverage of abortion. On July 31, the Committee on Energy and Commerce favorably reported a bill that was amended to address some pro-life concerns, but

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still provides for federally mandated abortion coverage.

Senate: On July 15, the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee voted out its bill, the Affordable Health Choices Act (not yet numbered). During markup the committee rejected amendments to exclude federal funding or mandated coverage for abortion and to maintain current state laws limiting and regulating abortion. The Senate Finance Committee continues to work on a bill that it hopes will be able to secure bipartisan support.

No matter how you personally feel about healthcare reform, as Christians, we must ensure that abortion is not included as part of a national health care benefit.

We all agree that any health care reform plan should not force us to pay for the destruction of human life, whether it is through government funding or mandatory coverage of abortion. Even some proponents of Health Care Reform have asked congress to amend the bill so it will not expand federal funding of abortion, mandate abortion coverage, preempt state laws on abortion, or protect conscience rights of health care providers.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

[Focus on the Family Citizenlink: Healthcare](#)

[Knights of Columbus: Health Care Reform Must Exclude Abortion Coverage](#)

[See the National Committee for Human Life Amendment \(NCHLA\) information sheet by clicking here.](#)

[Click here for a backgrounder on the legal "status quo" on abortion and conscience rights from the NCHLA.](#)

[United States Conference of Catholic Bishops](#)

Our sources tell us that the committee-approved bill shows progress but still provides for government-

mandated abortion coverage.

**ACTION:** Please contact our Hawaii delegation through personal phone calls. We encourage you to ring their phones off the hook. They are in town locally because they are currently on recess so now is a great time to call. An email campaign will be set up very shortly using our votervoice system. In addition, you are encouraged to attend open Town Hall meetings. Ask questions until you are satisfied with their answers.

- Call Senator Daniel Akaka at (808) 522-8970 (Oahu) or (808) 935-1114 (Hilo)
- Call Senator Daniel Inouye at (808) 541-2542 (Oahu) or (808) 935-0844 (Hilo)
- Call Representative Neil Abercrombie at (808) 541-2570
- Call Representative Mazie Hirono at (808) 541-1986

[Click here for PDF version of Hawaii Congressional delegation.](#)

**MESSAGE:** "A health care reform bill must exclude mandated coverage for abortion, and uphold longstanding laws that restrict abortion funding and protect conscience rights."

Floor votes could occur in House and Senate soon after the August recess so make your calls today.

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### **Voter Registration Drives in Churches**

Many churches will be conducting voter registration drives in the upcoming months.

As citizens not only of the State of Hawaii, but also the United States of America, no right is more precious than the constitutional right and civic duty we have in selecting our leaders. Yet many of eligible voters in Hawaii, especially Christians, are not even registered to vote.

There was a time in our nation's history when barriers were erected

to limit citizen access to the voting booth. Today, after the hard work and sacrifice of so many Americans, all citizens are guaranteed the right to have their voices heard.

### **Why Non-Partisan Parish Voter Registration Drives Are Important**

Non-partisan voter registration drives are excellent opportunities to educate people about the scriptural mandate reflecting the importance of civic responsibility and active citizenship. Did you know that churches are among the few institutions that can reach groups notably under-registered or under-represented in the political process? Think about it...

- **Low-Income People:** According to the U. S. Census Bureau, in 2006 only 34 percent of eligible voters whose families made under \$25,000 per year actually voted, compared to 64 percent of all eligible voters.
- **Racial and Ethnic Minorities:** African Americans, Hispanics, and other racial and ethnic minorities have voter participation rates significantly below the national average. We encourage each church to develop a sense of social consciousness and to advocate for social change and social development, which could include church-based voter registration.
- **New Citizens, Immigrants, and Refugees:** New citizens are often anxious to exercise their voting rights but are confused about the process. A church voter registration campaign can help educate them about when and where they can vote. It can also present an opportunity to identify those who wish to become citizens. They can then be referred the immigration office at Catholic Charities.
- **Youth:** Young people vote at an alarmingly low rate compared to the rest of the adult population. In 2008, according to Pew Research on national statistics, young voters were estimated to be 18% of the total, up slightly from 17% four years ago.
- **Women:** While women are now registering and voting in larger numbers, they are still under-represented in the political process.

Ask your pastor if you want to help with the registration drive in your church. For more information on how to conduct a voter registration drive in your church, [click here](#).

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### **Upcoming Events**

## **CAN Training Coming to First Assembly of God on Red Hill**

First Assembly of God on Red Hill is the hosting the first ever OPEN CAN training for the community. CAN is Hawaii Family Forums “Community Action Network.” It’s a network for people who want to be part of a grassroots campaign that encompasses the entire State of Hawaii. This exciting network includes Christian churches from across denominational lines: Protestant, Presbyterian, Evangelical, Roman Catholic and Baptist.

Please join us on:

**September 3, 2009**

**First Assembly of God on Red Hill**

**7:00 – 9:00 p.m.**

The workshop will give an overview of the legislative process, so participants can better understand the process of how a bill moves through the legislature. This is a critical part of the presentation because so many people wonder why alerts are sent with deadlines of 48 hours.

Because Dennis Arakaki comes to Hawaii Family Forum / Hawaii Catholic Conference with over 20 years of legislative experience, you can rest assured that you will be given tips that are tried and true. Many people who have attended the workshop have thanked us for explaining the legislative process. Although the process seems complicated, you can participate and make a difference.

Finally, it will also give pointers on how to testify, contacting your legislator successfully, and what you can do to make a difference in the community. A local Alliance Defense Fund attorney will also present the legal dos and don'ts for churches, individuals and pastors. This part has been well accepted by Pastors because they walk away feeling much more confident about getting involved.

This workshop is free and open to the public, although registration is required.

- [\(Click here for a flyer detailing the event.\)](#)
- [\(Click here for a PDF fillable/printable registration form.\)](#)

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**Save the Date: Foundational Workshop on Faithful Citizenship Coming to Manoa Punahou Catholic Community**

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**November 3, 2009**

**7:00 – 9:00 p.m.**

Catholics in the Manoa-Punahou Catholic Community (and other interested Catholic parishioners from other churches) are invited to attend a free foundational workshop that will present a solid Catholic foundation for getting involved in public policy via Faithful Citizenship. If you want to know what the Church teaches about getting involved, than this workshop is for you. More information (and information on how to register for this free workshop) is

forthcoming.

If you have any questions in the meantime, call the office at (808) 203-6704.

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## **Give Aloha at Foodland & Sack n Save to Help Us Raise Funds!**

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Our organization is once again participating in Give Aloha, Foodland's Annual Community Matching Gifts Program. (See graphic to the right). This program honors Foodland's founder, Maurice J. "Sully" Sullivan, and continues his legacy of giving back to the community.

**How It Works:** From September 1—30, customers are invited to make donations of up to a cumulative total of \$249 per person, per organization to participating Hawaii non-profit organization at checkout. Foodland and the Western Union Foundation will match a portion of each donation.\*

**How to Donate:** At checkout, present your Maika'i Card and inform the cashier that you would like to make a donation to our organization. If you do not have a Maika'i Card, you may request one. Our five digit registration code is 78227. Your donation will be added to your grocery purchase total. You may give up to \$249 per organization (donations exceeding \$249 will not be matched). The amount you have donated to us and the name of our organization will appear on your receipt. Any donation must be made payable to Foodland or Sack N Save.

All contributions made through the Foodland Give Aloha drive are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. Please save your store receipt for tax purposes since it will be the only record you will have of your donation.

**\*How Matching Gifts Will Be Calculated:** Matching Gifts will be calculated after the end of the program. Organizations will receive 100% of all customer donations given to their organization, plus their % of Foodland's \$285,000 matching gift. The portion of the matching gift that each organization will receive will be based on the total dollar amount of customer donations designated to that organization as a % of all customer donations received for all organizations.

**IMPORTANT:** Donor names will not be released to our organization, so if you would like us to know of your gift, please let us know when and how much you gave so we may properly acknowledge your gift. We will send you an acknowledgement

letter for you to use for tax purposes. Mahalo for your kokua!

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