

May 27, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
United States House of Representatives
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Republican Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leaders:

In anticipation of the President's FY22 budget, we write to you to urge you to retain the longstanding pro-life appropriations amendments including the Hyde Amendment in this year's appropriations. While House Appropriations Chairwoman DeLauro has pledged to eliminate these vital, status quo protections, they are critical longstanding policies that respect the dignity of the unborn and conscience of taxpayers.

In 1976, just three years after *Roe v. Wade*, the Hyde Amendment was first added to appropriations to prohibit federal funds from paying for elective abortions. This was in response to the government's funding of hundreds of thousands of abortions each year since *Roe*. The Supreme Court upheld the Hyde Amendment,¹ ruling that the legality of abortion did not obligate the funding of abortion.² To date, the Hyde Amendment has saved over 2.4 million lives.³

Congressman Hyde spoke of his amendment not simply as a means for Americans to wash their hands of the scourge of abortion, but as an instrument to advance the next front for human rights.

*For over two centuries of our national history, we have struggled to create a society of inclusion — we keep widening the circle of those for whom we are responsible — the aged, the infirm, the poor... This great trajectory in our national history has been shattered by *Roe v. Wade* and its progeny. By denying an entire class of human beings the welcome and protection of our laws, we have betrayed the best in our tradition.⁴*

The process of keeping taxpayers out of the abortion business that began with the first Hyde Amendment has since been consistently applied to other federal programs through additional amendments. Together, these important pro-life amendments included in appropriations in the decades since 1976 form the pro-life intent of Hyde. These Hyde-like amendments include protections for the vulnerable at home (Hyde, Dornan, Smith) and abroad (Helms, Siljander, Tiahrt), in research (Dickey-Wicker), for medical providers and others who object to abortion (Hyde-Weldon, Nickles).

¹ <https://www.oyez.org/cases/1979/79-1268>

² <https://lozierinstitute.org/the-hyde-amendment-is-constitutional-and-remains-critically-important/>

³ <https://lozierinstitute.org/addendum-to-hyde-40-analyzing-the-impact-of-the-hyde-amendment/>

⁴ <https://www.nationalreview.com/2017/11/henry-hyde-pro-life-hero-died-ten-years-ago/>

Americans strongly support the various amendments in the Hyde family. The prohibitions on funding for abortion abroad, including the Helms and Siljander amendments, are supported by 77% of Americans, including 64% of self-described “pro-choice” voters, 55% of Democrats, and 85% of Independents.⁵ Furthermore, protections like Hyde-Weldon that prevent discrimination against health care professionals, facilities, and insurance plans who object to providing, covering, or referring for abortion receive support from 83% of the American public.⁶

A strong majority of Americans support the first Hyde Amendment, with 58% of voters – including 31% of Democrats, 34% of self-described pro-choice voters, and 65% of Independents – opposing taxpayer funding of abortion.⁷ These lifesaving provisions across federal appropriations have been consistently supported by Republicans and Democrats in Congress for decades. Every president from Carter to Bush to Obama to Trump have signed into law appropriations incorporating critical, status quo protections.

As recently as 2006, then-Senator Biden was on the record opposing tax funding of abortion, saying, “I do not vote for funding for abortion... I won’t support public funding.” Yet when on the presidential campaign trail in 2019, he flip-flopped to support abortion funding, directly contradicting his longstanding position.

The impact of more than 2.4 million lives saved as a result of Congressman Hyde’s amendment and those amendments that followed cannot be measured. Congress has the duty and privilege to continue this legacy of protecting the vulnerable.⁸ There has never been such an important time for Congress to recognize the dignity of every life by reaffirming support and retaining the Hyde family of pro-life protections in FY22 funding.

Hyde saves lives.

Sincerely,

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Carol Tobias
President
National Right to Life

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President
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Associate Director
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

Catherine Glenn Foster
President and CEO
Americans United for Life

⁵ <https://www.kofc.org/en/news-room/polls/american-abortion-opinions-remain-consistent.html>

⁶ <https://www.usccb.org/about/pro-life-activities/upload/USCCB-Key-Takeaways-handout-final.pdf>

⁷ <https://www.kofc.org/en/news-room/polls/american-abortion-opinions-remain-consistent.html>

⁸ <http://www.hellohyde.org/>

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