



A Passionate Voice for Compassionate Care

July 28, 2010

Senate Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the Catholic Health Association (CHA), the national leadership organization of more than 2,000 Catholic health care sponsors, systems, hospitals, long-term care facilities, and related organizations, I am writing to urge you to support the continued inclusion of strong protections of individual and institutional conscience rights in the FY2011 appropriation bill providing funding for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies.

The Catholic health ministry provides care throughout the nation to patients of all ages, races and religious beliefs. Building upon our country's tradition of pluralism and the freedom to exercise our beliefs, CHA has long supported language within appropriations legislation to prohibit federal funding of abortions (Hyde amendment) and language to protect hospitals and other institutional and individual health care providers should they decline to provide, pay for, or refer for abortions (Weldon amendment). We believe that continuing to retain these protections in current law represents good public policy, and we are pleased to note that they have been included in appropriations legislation approved by Congress over the past several years.

Continuing to provide strong conscience protections is particularly important this year, as the provisions and intent of the Affordable Care Act of 2010 are beginning to be implemented. The Catholic health ministry remains committed to serving the health needs of all, and to implementing health reform that continues to respect the contributions and rights to conscience of religiously affiliated health care providers. Your support for the inclusion of Hyde-Weldon protections in the appropriations legislation will help ensure that our ministry continues to be able to provide care to our patients and to support health care that serves everyone.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sr. Carol Keehan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sr. Carol Keehan, DC
President and CEO