

Opposition to a \$1.5 Billion Abortion ‘Bailout’ Intensifies

A pro-life group has galvanizing thousands of voters to contact Congress in opposing a bold abortion agenda submitted to President-elect Obama by abortion advocates.



[] An ambitious \$1.5 billion plan, signed by powerful advocates of the abortion industry and submitted to Barack Obama’s transition team, is being dubbed the “Abortion Industry Bailout” by the head of a Washington-based watchdog group that tracks abortion legislation.

“After a decade of commonsense restrictions on taxpayer funding, the abortion industry thinks it deserves a bailout from President-elect Obama,” said Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of the Susan B. Anthony List (SBAL), which earlier this week launched “Stop the Abortion Bailout” grassroots campaign.

The 55-page manifesto titled “Advancing Reproductive Rights and Health in a New Administration” and posted online by Obama’s transition team outlines 15 priorities for Obama’s first 100 days in office. It is signed by more than 60 pro-abortion groups, including Planned Parenthood, NARAL, the ACLU and the Sierra Club.

The goal of the SBAL campaign is to secure the 41 votes in the U.S. Senate necessary to filibuster any congressional action seen as a promotion of federal taxpayer funding for abortion.

Highlights of the plan’s marching orders include: de-funding abstinence programs; repealing the Hyde Amendment; increasing federal funding for abortions to \$700 million; providing funding for UN-backed abortions abroad; and appointing only judges who support abortion.

Said Dannenfelser: "President-elect Barack Obama spoke of finding 'common ground' on abortion policy, but abortion advocacy groups clearly see an open door."

Though the door may appear open, the abortion advocacy groups notably left one divisive item off their top 15 list—the Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA), which would federally codify *Roe v. Wade* and potentially make abortion legal even if the renowned case was ever overturned. Obama has indicated in the past that one of his first orders of business in the White House would be signing FOCA into law.

One SBAL staff member told *Charisma* a top priority for the pro-life community in Obama's first 100 days in office is preserving the Hyde Amendment, which was enacted in 1976 to restrict Medicare and Medicaid funding for abortions.

"To repeal that would be a major, major setback," said Joy Yearout, political director of the Susan B. Anthony List. "It would just open the floodgates [to dramatic increases in abortions]."

It is unclear to what extent President-elect Obama will be willing to compromise on the issue of abortion. Pre-election rhetoric and his voting record suggest his position is firmly pro-choice, yet he appears committed to a reputation he's developed that is known for inviting input from both sides of an argument.

A miraculous change of heart will be necessary though if the pro-life community is ever to find an advocate in President-elect Obama, according to Lou Engle, a prayer leader and prominent pro-life voice.

"[When] I consider that 50 million babies have been killed since the ruling handed down in *Roe v. Wade* that legalized abortion and that the incoming president plans to ensure the ongoing legality of this march of death, I cannot live in peace," he wrote on his blog after last month's elections.

"In this election we have bowed the knee to Baal and chosen prosperity over posterity. Abortion is a spiritual battle. The blood of babies is not another socio-political issue," Engle wrote. "We must pray for Obama. He is not our enemy."

On Thursday, the Bush administration issued the pro-life "right of conscience" regulation, which allows medical staff to refuse abortion-related work that they object to on moral grounds.

Yearout, who reported thousands already taking action in "Stop the Abortion Bailout" initiative, said SBAL and others worry that restrictions on abortions enacted during the eight years of the Bush administration could be reversed.

"The abortion industry and President-elect Obama are looking to overturn many of those restrictions and expand direct taxpayer funding for abortion through a myriad of federal programs," she said.

The Christian Defense Coalition sent a letter to Obama on Wednesday appealing for a private audience with the president-elect.

"In a spirit of openness, dialogue and diversity," wrote Patrick J. Mahoney, director of the Christian Defense Coalition, "the pro-life community seeks a first time face-to-face meeting with you to establish a foundation on how we can all work together to build a 'culture of life,' which honors equality and human rights, and ends abortion." **-Paul Steven Ghiringhelli**