

Family Research Council: We Like BCRA 2.0

After having a chance to dig deeper than the Senate Republican Conference's explanation of the key changes to the Better Care Reconciliation Act, the Family Research Council discovered some hidden gems that make it a much better bill than advertised.

For starters, it defunds Planned Parenthood—which is what triggered the loss of support from Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine. But, it also replaces several key pieces of the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, with pro-life provisions. While it's still not as good as the House's American Health Care Act, FRC explained in a statement why it still supports the Senate health care legislation:

BCRA, for one year, would eliminate more than \$390 million (over 86 percent) of over \$450 million in annual federal funding to Planned Parenthood, from all mandatory government spending programs. This is identical to the provision ruled to comply with the Senate's Byrd Rule in 2015. BCRA would also redirect funding to community health centers, which outnumber Planned Parenthood facilities 20 to 1 and offer a wider array of health care services, but not abortion. BCRA also would provide premium credits that may not be used for health care plans that cover elective abortion, a reversal of the massive Obamacare expansion of elective abortion. It also would provide states more funds and flexibility, without subsidizing abortion, to lower health care costs, which have risen dramatically under Obamacare, and therefore will provide families more affordable options to obtain healthcare suited to their needs.

Family Research Council scored in favor of the House-passed

version, the American Health Care Act, and overall supports the new Senate draft. While there are pro-life concerns with some provisions, such as the new \$70 billion fund to insurers, this bill is moving in the pro-life direction.

"We applaud the many Senate leaders who have worked diligently over the last several weeks to ensure that the Better Care Reconciliation Act restores the pro-life principles of the Hyde Amendment that abortion is not health care, and therefore should not be funded or subsidized," FRC President Tony Perkins added. "Leader Mitch McConnell, Chairman Mike Enzi, R-Wyo.; the Senate Values Action Team co-chairs Senators Roy Blunt R-Mo.; James Lankford, R-Okla.; Joni Ernst, R-Iowa; Steve Daines, R-Mt; and Luther Strange, R-Ala., along with their staff deserve credit for working tirelessly to ensure that this BCRA restores the Hyde Amendment principles. The Senate draft would accomplish this by preventing subsidies for plans with elective abortion and by defunding Planned Parenthood, and it also creates greater flexibility and more affordable health care options for families.

"Obamacare bypassed the Hyde Amendment and violated a long-standing bipartisan understanding that taxpayers who are morally opposed to abortion should not be forced to fund it. The Senate draft restores the Hyde Amendment principles. FRC supports the Better Care Reconciliation Act in its current form, and while we are confident the Senate can pass a bill that respects life, if the abortion-funding restrictions are removed, we will be forced to withdraw our support."

Republicans hoping to see an improved "score" from the new legislation, or those who were holding off their support for the bill until they saw a new one from the Congressional Budget Office, were dealt some bad news early Monday morning. The CBO won't score the new draft of the BRCA. As earlier reported, however, the medical emergency involving Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., over the weekend has resulted in the postponement of the planned vote this week on the legislation.

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