

New Legislation Could Give Prescriptions For Abortion

Before the landmark health care overhaul passed March 21,  Michigan Rep. Bart Stupak led pro-life Democrats in opposing the legislation because of concerns it would allow federal funding for abortion. But after the White House agreed to issue an executive order prohibiting public abortion funding in the bill, Stupak switched his vote and said confidently that the measure “does not fund abortion.”

But many pro-life Christians are unconvinced. They say executive orders don't have the force of law and can easily be revoked. “There is no way that an executive order will protect the unborn or prevent the greatest expansion of elective abortion since *Roe v. Wade*,” said Family Research Council President Tony Perkins.

Americans United for Life is planning a campaign to help states opt out of subsidizing plans that cover abortions. And many pro-life groups are looking toward November, when they hope to unseat lawmakers who supported the bill and work to repeal the law.

But some Christians say the health reform bill will help deter women from having abortions, noting that the law includes a \$250 million provision to support prenatal, postnatal and adoption incentives.

“This bill is a huge leap forward because a truly pro-life stance does not start at conception and end at birth,” said Ronald J. Sider, president of Evangelicals for Social Action and author of *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*. “It means respecting the sanctity of human life for all of a person's life.”

The health reform legislation is expected to insure 32 million

of the 47 million Americans who reportedly lack health insurance.

The bill expands Medicaid and subsidies to the poor, and will eventually prohibit insurance companies from being able to place lifetime caps or deny coverage to patients due to pre-existing conditions. The law also requires most Americans to purchase health insurance or face penalties.

That provision has been at the center of a spate of state lawsuits challenging the constitutionality of the law. The American Center for Law and Justice said it plans to file amicus briefs in support of those states. And Liberty Counsel filed a federal lawsuit on behalf of Liberty University, which "self-insures" its 5,100 employees.

"Forcing health insurance on every person and employer is a stunning example of arbitrary power the Constitution does not give to federal bureaucrats," said Mathew D. Staver, founder of Liberty Counsel and dean of the Liberty University School of Law.