

The PRO-LIFE COMMITTEE has listed below (in order of criticalness) 4 issues for your IMMEDIATE ATTENTION.

### **1. PRESIDENT OBAMA MOVES to RESCIND the "CONSCIENCE RULE"**

Pres. Bush, two days before Obama took office, put in place a "Conscience Rule" which would protect the conscience rights of health care providers in federally-funded hospitals and clinics so that they would not have to counsel patients about or perform abortions or other such services.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is accepting comments from the public for 30 days (from March 10 - April 9) regarding this reversal of Bush's regulation. Deirdre McQuade, assistant director for policy and communications in the U.S. bishops' Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, is encouraging participation in this comment process "by all committed to the sanctity of human life, the freedom of conscience and the ethical integrity of our healing professions."

"Efforts to nullify or weaken any conscience protection will undermine our national heritage of diversity and religious freedom, reduce patients' access to life-affirming health care, and endanger the national consensus required to enact much-needed health care reform," she added in a statement.

SPECIFICS: HHS is asking for comment on four specific aspects of the regulation:

- "The scope and nature of the problems giving rise to the federal rulemaking," including specific examples, "and how the current rule would resolve those problems."
- Information, with examples, to support or refute allegations that the regulation "reduces access to information and health care services, particularly by low-income women."
- Whether the rule is clear enough "to minimize the potential for any ambiguity and confusion" that might result from it.
- Whether the objectives of the rule could be accomplished "through non-regulatory means, such as outreach and education."

Planned Parenthood of America, which has filed suit against what it calls the "midnight regulation" of President George W. Bush, is mobilizing its members to support the rescission proposal. The organization said rescinding the regulation would restore "the rights of patients to receive complete and accurate reproductive health information and services, without fear that health care providers will withhold vital information and services based on their personal biases."

Our own U.S. Senator, Tom Coburn, is a pro-life OB/GYN in his hometown of Muskogee. On February 27, he told the Cybercast News Service that he will join tens of thousands of other medical professionals who would rather go to jail than be forced to do an abortion. "I think a lot of us will go to jail," Coburn said. "Let's see them prosecute the first one of us for not doing that." In a statement to Fox News, Senator Coburn said: "I will do nothing against my conscience in the practice of medicine ever regardless of what any law is at any time." "And I can tell you that there are a lot of physicians that feel exactly that same way across the country."

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- 1) Submit your comments against the rescission of the "conscience rule" electronically on the website

[www.Regulations.gov](http://www.Regulations.gov) (by entering 0991-AB49 in the search box) or via e-mail to [proposedrescission@hhs.gov](mailto:proposedrescission@hhs.gov). If you send an email, attachments may be in Microsoft Word, WordPerfect or Excel, but Microsoft Word is preferred. By mail, one original and two copies of written comments may be sent to: Office of Public Health and Science,

Department of Health and Human Services, Attention: Rescission Proposal Comments, Hubert H. Humphrey Building,

200 Independence Ave. SW, Room 716G, Washington, DC 20201.

2) Send Sen. Coburn a message via U.S. mail or call him at: Senator Tom A. Coburn, United States Senate, 172

Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510-3603. **Phone:** (202) 224-5754 **Fax:** (202) 224-6008 Email:

<http://coburn.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=ContactSenatorCoburn.Home>.

#### **SOURCES:**

<http://ncronline.org/news/30-day-comment-period-conscience-rule-open> (Nat'l Catholic Reporter)

<http://www.lifenews.com/nat4875.html> (article about Senator Tom Coburn)

<http://www.americancatholic.org/News/newsreport.aspx?id=792>

<http://www.usccb.org/comm/archives/2009/09-046.shtml> (U.S. Catholic Bishops' website)

<http://www.foxnews.com/politics/first100days/2009/03/03/obama-repeal-bush-abortion-regulation/>

## **2. PROPOSED AMENDMENT for PARENTAL RIGHTS**

Representative Pete Hoekstra (R-MI) has committed to introducing the bill for a Parental Rights Amendment in the House of Representatives again this year (H.J. Res. 97 in 2008). Rep. Hoekstra wants to have 50 co-sponsors by the time he presents the bill to communicate the fact that we are serious about this legislation. As of Wednesday, March 11, 33 co-sponsors committed to joining Rep. Hoekstra, so 17 more are needed to reach this goal and introduce the bill in the House.

The U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), already ratified by 193 countries except for the U.S. and Somalia, is a ruling which (if passed) will supersede the U.S. Constitution's protection of parental rights in favor of the rights of children. The CRC will give children rights to freedom of religion, education, association, abortion, media, leisure, etc. which may or may not be in keeping with the parents' guidance on what is best for their child(ren).

### **Ten things you need to know about the structure of the CRC:**

1. It is a treaty which creates binding rules of law. It is no mere statement of altruism.
2. Its effect would be binding on American families, courts, and policy-makers.
3. Children of other nations would not be impacted in any direct way by our ratification.
4. The CRC would automatically override almost all American laws on children and families because of our Supremacy Clause.
5. The CRC has some elements that are self-executing, while others would require implementing legislation. Federal courts would have the power to determine which provisions were self-executing.
6. The Courts would have the power to directly enforce the provisions that are self-executing.
  1. Congress would have the power to directly legislate on all subjects necessary to comply with the treaty. This would constitute the most massive shift of power from the states to the federal government in American history.

2. A committee of 18 experts from other nations, sitting in Geneva, has the authority to issue official interpretations of the treaty which are entitled to binding weight in American courts and legislatures. This effectively transfers ultimate authority for all policies in this area to this foreign committee.
3. Under international law, the treaty overrides even our Constitution.
4. Reservations, declarations, or understandings intended to modify our duty to comply with this treaty will be void if they are determined to be inconsistent with the object and purpose of the treaty.

**Ten things you need to know about the *substance* of the CRC:**

1. Parents would no longer be able to administer reasonable spankings to their children.
2. A murderer aged 17 years, 11 months and 29 days at the time of his crime could no longer be sentenced to life in prison.
3. Children would have the ability to choose their own religion while parents would only have the authority to give their children advice about religion.
4. The best interest of the child principle would give the government the ability to override every decision made by every parent if a government worker disagreed with the parent's decision.
5. A child's "right to be heard" would allow him (or her) to seek governmental review of every parental decision with which the child disagreed.
6. According to existing interpretation, it would be illegal for a nation to spend more on national defense than it does on children's welfare.
7. Children would acquire a legally enforceable right to leisure.
8. Christian schools that refuse to teach "alternative worldviews" and teach that Christianity is the only true religion "fly in the face of article 29" of the treaty.
9. Allowing parents to opt their children out of sex education has been held to be out of compliance with the CRC. Children would have the right to reproductive health information and services, including abortions, without parental knowledge or consent.
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For a full explanation of all of these points, check out Mike Farris's article, "[Nannies in Blue Berets,](http://www.parentalrights.org/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC={2B53865E-A8C1-4FE6-AF67-08789FBE3C0A})" [http://www.parentalrights.org/index.asp?Type=B\\_BASIC&SEC={2B53865E-A8C1-4FE6-AF67-08789FBE3C0A}](http://www.parentalrights.org/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC={2B53865E-A8C1-4FE6-AF67-08789FBE3C0A}).

**WHAT YOU CAN DO:** Call your Representative (Tom Cole: 202-225-6165 or Frank Lucas: 202-225-5565) and urge him to contact Pete Hoekstra (pronounced "HOKE-struh") to become a co-sponsor of the Parental Rights Amendment. To confirm whether your congressman is Rep. Cole or Lucas, enter your zip code in the box at [www.Congress.org](http://www.Congress.org). Currently, Rep. Mary Fallin of District 5 is the only Oklahoma representative on the list.

**SOURCES:**

[www.parentalrights.org](http://www.parentalrights.org) (Parental Rights source – Michael Farris, President)  
<http://www.hsllda.org/parentalrights/default.asp> (Home School Legal Defense Association)

**3. FUNDS RELEASED for EMBRYONIC STEM CELL RESEARCH**

On March 9, Cardinal Justin Rigali, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Committee on Pro-Life Activities, called President Obama's executive order on embryonic stem cell

research “a sad victory of politics over science and ethics.” Under the order, for the first time in U.S. history, federal tax dollars will be used to encourage researchers to destroy live human embryos for stem cell research. Cardinal Rigali also cited a January 16 letter in which Cardinal Francis George, president of the USCCB, urged President-elect Obama not to issue such an order. Cardinal Rigali's statement follows:

“President Obama's new executive order on embryonic stem cell research is a sad victory of politics over science and ethics. This action is morally wrong because it encourages the destruction of innocent human life, treating vulnerable human beings as mere products to be harvested. It also disregards the values of millions of American taxpayers who oppose research that requires taking human life. Finally, it ignores the fact that ethically sound means for advancing stem cell science and medical treatments are readily available and in need of increased support.

“In his January 16th letter to President-elect Obama, Cardinal George, writing as President of the USCCB, cited three reasons why such destructive research is ‘especially pointless at this time’:

- ‘First, basic research in the capabilities of embryonic stem cells can be and is being pursued using the currently eligible cell lines as well as the hundreds of lines produced with nonfederal funds since 2001.
- ‘Second, recent startling advances in reprogramming adult cells into embryonic-like stem cells – hailed by the journal *Science* as the scientific breakthrough of the year – are said by many scientists to be making embryonic stem cells irrelevant to medical progress.
- ‘Third, adult and cord blood stem cells are now known to have great versatility, and are increasingly being used to reverse serious illnesses and even help rebuild damaged organs. To divert scarce funds away from these promising avenues for research and treatment toward the avenue that is most morally controversial as well as most medically speculative would be a sad victory of politics over science.’

“If the government wants to invest in hope for cures and promote ethically sound science, it should use our tax monies for research that everyone, at every stage of human development, can live with.”

WHAT YOU CAN DO: Become more educated about the subject of embryonic stem cell research in order to field questions with the correct information. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has issued this very informative document: <http://www.usccb.org/prolife/issues/bioethic/bishopsESCRstmt.pdf>. Also, pray and offer sacrifices daily for the conversion of world leaders!

SOURCES:

<http://usccb.org/comm/archives/2009/09-052.shtml>

[http://www.whitehouse.gov/the\\_press\\_office/Remarks-of-the-President-As-Prepared-for-Delivery-Signing-of-Stem-Cell-Executive-Order-and-Scientific-Integrity-Presidential-Memorandum/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-of-the-President-As-Prepared-for-Delivery-Signing-of-Stem-Cell-Executive-Order-and-Scientific-Integrity-Presidential-Memorandum/) (remarks of the President re: signing of stem cell executive order)

<http://www.catholic.org/politics/story.php?id=32541> (St. Joseph, MO Bishop Finn's response)

#### **4. RED ENVELOPE PROJECT**

Christ Otto, founder of the Red Envelope Project, challenges us to send 50 million red envelopes (one for every child who died before having a chance to live) to President Obama in the hopes that he'll change his heart. Share the website (<http://www.redenvelopeproject.org/>) with your friends and family so they can send one, too.

**WHAT YOU CAN DO:** Our Tri-Parish Pro-Life Committee has purchased RED ENVELOPES already addressed to:

President Barack Obama, The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20500  
On the back is printed the following message: "This envelope represents one child who died in abortion. It is empty because that life was unable to offer anything to the world. Responsibility begins with conception."

**These Red Envelopes will be available at each church entrance next Sunday, March 22.** Take one home, write your return address on it, affix a 42¢ stamp to it, and put it in the U.S. mail on March 31. There will be some "extras" should you know someone else, outside our tri-parishes, who will definitely do their part in sending a red envelope.

Spend a few minutes daily in silent prayer for the conversion of our leaders and for the protection of the unborn and all life from conception to natural death.

#### **SOURCES:**

<http://www.lifenews.com/nat4837.html> (article about the humble beginnings of this program)

<http://www.redenvelopeproject.org/> (instructions on participating in the Red Envelope Project)

**If you would like printed copies from any of these websites, or more information on any of the above subjects, please contact: Terese Larres at 492-4438 or [tess8171@yahoo.com](mailto:tess8171@yahoo.com); or Karen Landoll at 492-5914 or [stann@tds.net](mailto:stann@tds.net). These 4 issues on pro-life are also available on Word document for your convenience to "send" to your friends, co-workers, family in other places. Make email request to Karen to send this document to you in an attachment.**