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**PERMANENT BAN ON ABORTION FUNDING LONG OVERDUE, SAYS USCCB IN HOUSE TESTIMONY**

WASHINGTON A permanent ban on abortion funding is long overdue, which is why the U.S. bishops support the No Taxpayer Funding of Abortion Act (H.R. 3), said a representative of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in February 8 testimony to the Subcommittee on the Constitution of the House Judiciary Committee.

H.R. 3 will write into permanent law a policy on which there has been strong popular and congressional agreement for over 35 years: The federal government should not use tax dollars to support or promote elective abortion, said Richard Doerflinger, associate director of the Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). Since 1976 this principle has been embodied in the Hyde amendment to annual appropriations bills funding the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and in numerous similar provisions governing a wide range of domestic and foreign programs. It has consistently had the support of the American people.

Doerflinger noted that support for the Hyde amendment is so broad that many have assumed it is already a permanent part of federal law when it is actually a rider on the annual Labor/HHS appropriations bill, applying only to funds under that act.

Doerflinger also highlighted the need for more secure protection for the conscience rights of health care providers who do not participate in abortion, citing the substantial role of Catholic hospitals in providing health care in the United States.

If Congress wants to expand rather than eliminate access to life-saving health care, particularly for the poor and underserved, it should be concerned about any effort to attack the rights of these providers and undermine their continued ability to serve the common good, said Doerflinger.

The full testimony can be found online at: [www.usccb.org/prolife/HR3-testimony-2011-02-08.pdf](http://www.usccb.org/prolife/HR3-testimony-2011-02-08.pdf)

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