



NEWS

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DATE: October 14, 2011

BISHOPS' PRO-LIFE OFFICIAL HAILS HOUSE PASSAGE OF 'PROTECT LIFE ACT'

WASHINGTON—The Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) welcomed passage in the House of the 'Protect Life Act' (H.R. 358). Sponsored by Rep. Joseph Pitts (R-PA) and Rep. Dan Lipinski (D-IL) and 144 co-sponsors, the Protect Life Act would apply longstanding federal policies on abortion funding, and conscience rights on abortion, to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) passed in 2010. Late on October 13, the House passed H.R. 358 by a bipartisan vote of 251 to 172.

"By passing the Protect Life Act, the House has taken an important step toward authentic health care reform that respects the dignity of all, from conception onward," Deirdre McQuade, USCCB pro-life spokeswoman, said.

As Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, chairman of the bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities, said in his October 12 [letter to Congress](#), the Protect Life Act "will bring PPACA into line with policies on abortion and conscience rights that have long prevailed in other federal health programs."

"The Protect Life Act would help protect vulnerable children, their families and doctors in several ways," McQuade said. "It applies the Hyde amendment to PPACA so federal funds will not be used to subsidize elective abortions, bringing this law into line with other federal health programs such as Medicaid and the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program."

"The Act also helps ensure that the government will not pressure health professionals to participate in abortion against their medical judgment, moral convictions or religious beliefs," McQuade added.

"Now that the House has acted, it's the Senate's turn to help make health care reform life-affirming," McQuade said.

For the full text of Cardinal DiNardo's October 12 letter to Congress, see: <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/religious-liberty/conscience-protection/upload/protect-life-act-letter-2011-11.pdf>.

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