

public affairs update

Still Awaiting Controversial HHS Regulation To Be Issued by Bush Administration

Although the Nov. 1st regulation deadline has passed, the Bush administration has yet to make any announcement regarding the controversial HHS regulation that would allow health care providers to opt out of providing services they morally oppose. In anticipation of the regulation passing, Planned Parenthood is not sitting back quietly.

Here are some of the steps the organization has taken in preparation:

- PPFA joined forces with the Center for Reproductive Rights and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) to send a letter to the U.S. Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA), the only oversight agency with the ability to hold the administration accountable.

In May, the administration required all agencies to submit proposed regulations by June 1, 2008, except for "extraordinary circumstances," in order to "ensure that agencies did not engage in ill-conceived rule making prior to a change of administration." That said, the Bush Administration has not explained why this very restrictive and divisive HHS regulation is among the exceptions to the rule.

- Planned Parenthood Federation of America issued a press release on Wednesday, November 19, 2008 applauding Senators Hillary Clinton and Patty Murray for their efforts to block a proposed HHS regulation that would give health providers the right to "based on their personal biases, to withhold both services and the critical information women need to make fully informed decisions about their health care."

Senators Clinton and Murray introduced the Protecting Patients and Health Care Act in an effort to block the HHS regulation on the basis that "with this sweeping regulation, HHS exceeded its authority under the statutes it is claiming to interpret."

- Planned Parenthood has collected over 30,000 opposing the HHS regulation and is looking to meet a goal of collecting 50,000 signatures to deliver to the White House. To sign the petition, visit:
http://www.ppaction.org/campaign/hhsnov08_pporg

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December 2008

public affairs update cont.

Anti-Choice Activists and Reproductive Rights Advocates Finding Obama's "Common Ground?"

Causing a Divide within the anti-choice movement?

In a monumental shift, anti-choice activists appear to be turning to different legislative activities focused on providing assistance to pregnant women rather than banning abortion. Many are citing the results of the November 4th election as the reason for such a shift in the anti-choice agenda.. Anti-choice activists are even working with advocates in the reproductive rights movement to "push for legislation to provide pregnant women with health care, child care and money for education – services that could encourage them to continue their pregnancies," according to a November 19th article by Jacqueline L. Salmon in The Philadelphia Inquirer. Their goal is to reduce the number of abortions by supporting programs that would help women who may otherwise consider having an abortion instead of continuing the pregnancy. The shift seems to be causing a large divide in the anti-choice movement but is encouraging news for reproductive rights advocates.

International News:

Lawmakers in Uruguay Unable to Override Veto of Bill To Decriminalize Abortions

According to the Daily Women's Health Policy Report issued by the National Partnership for Women and Families, Uruguay Lawmakers were unable to obtain enough votes to override a presidential veto of "a bill that would have decriminalized abortion in the first trimester of pregnancy." Current law is very restrictive, only allowing abortions in cases of rape or if the health of the mother is endangered. The veto came after the Roman Catholic Church expressed "deep discomfort" with the bill.

Upcoming Events: Mark your Calendars!

- Patient Escort Trainings:
December 8th - 6:00-7:30pm at 216 W. State Street, Media
December 9th - 6:00-7:30pm at 1144 Locust Street, Philadelphia
- Clinic Advocacy Training: 1144 Locust Street, Philadelphia
December 10th - 6:00-7:30pm
- Volunteer Night: 1144 Locust Street, Philadelphia
December 17th - 5:30-8:00pm

To RSVP or for information about these or other PPSP events, contact the External Affairs Department at externalaffairs@ppsp.org or 215.351.5585.

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Works by local artists:

- Pins by LisaBeth Weber
- The 2009 Naked Folk Calendar by Jayne Toohey.



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