



# CATHOLIC MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

*Upholding the Principles of the Catholic Faith in the Science and Practice of Medicine*

## Statement on Health-Care Reform and Authentic Catholic Witness

As the Democrat party accelerates efforts to enact comprehensive health-care legislation before the Easter recess, the [Catholic Health Association](#), [leaders of women's religious orders](#), and [academics at Catholic institutions](#) have endorsed Senate bill H.R. 3590 and called for the House of Representatives to pass this bill as-is. In so doing, they have intentionally and publicly contradicted the [policy position of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops \(USCCB\)](#).

The Catholic Medical Association (CMA) agrees with the conclusion of Denver Archbishop Charles Chaput, O.F.M., that these groups “[have done a grave disservice to the American Catholic community by undermining the leadership of the nation's Catholic bishops, sowing confusion among faithful Catholics, and misleading legislators through their support of the Senate bill.](#)” Should this political ploy prove successful in persuading some legislators to vote for this flawed bill, these individuals and groups will have done a grave disservice to human dignity and to the common good of this nation.

Senate bill H.R. 3590 is a substantially flawed and unacceptable piece of legislation. Its policy positions on abortion and conscience rights alone warrant rejecting the entire bill. The evidence is clear that:

- The [Stupak amendment is absolutely essential](#) if massive new funding of abortion is to be prevented;
- [Governmental subsidies for abortion increase the abortion rate](#);
- Senate bill H.R. 3590 provides [multiple new streams of funding for abortion](#);
- Key proponents of abortion, including [President Obama](#), [Nancy Pelosi](#), [Rep. Henry Waxman](#) and [Kathleen Sebelius](#), specifically reject the Stupak amendment and understand that Senate bill H.R. 3590 effectively circumvents its provisions;
- Senate bill H.R. 3590 [does not include the most fundamental conscience rights protection under current law](#) – the Hyde-Weldon amendment's protection against being coerced to participate in abortion by a governmental entity;
- Senate bill H.R. 3590 [requires all enrollees in health insurance plans covering abortion to pay, separately and exclusively, for abortions](#) obtained by other plan participants.

Given this evidence above, it is difficult to understand how some Catholics could lobby in favor of such legislation. Given the significance of the issues at stake, and the consistent, compelling policy guidance provided by the U.S. bishops on these matters, publicly opposing and/or undermining the U.S. bishops at this time is imprudent and uncharitable.

The CMA holds that there are multiple other serious failings in the health-care legislation and legislative process of the last year. To name only three:

- Senate and House legislation relies heavily on the federal government to dictate solutions for the real problems in U.S. health-care financing and delivery, [an approach that is flawed in principle and ineffective, if not dangerous, in practice](#). Such an approach would violate the principle of subsidiarity further undermine the physician-patient relationship , and represent a failure to learn from the ongoing systemic problems affecting Medicare and Medicaid.
- Senate bill H.R. 3590 [refuses to make any advance in effecting a more just and constructive solution](#) to the health care access challenges faced by immigrants.
- The current legislative approach is [unsustainable from an economic standpoint](#). Enacting it would represent not only poor stewardship, but an injustice to future generations.

Given the considerations presented above, the Catholic Medical Association calls upon all Catholics, particularly those who have recently lobbied publicly in favor of H.R. 3590, to demonstrate unity and charity in opposing the central flaws in current legislation and in working together to achieve authentic health- care reform in a timely manner.

Founded in 1932, the Catholic Medical Association is the largest association of Catholic physicians in North America. CMA represents more that 1,400 national-level medical professionals and many more Catholic physicians and health care providers at the local level. For more information, go to [www.cathmed.org](http://www.cathmed.org).

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