



Hyde Amendment and Biden

The Hyde Amendment is back in the news. Named after former Illinois Republican Congressman Henry Hyde, its chief sponsor, the amendment forbids the use of federal funds to pay for abortion. It passed in the House of Representatives in 1976 by a vote of 207 to 167 and saw final passage in early 1977. Exceptions to its restrictions originally included allowing the use of federal funding if abortion was deemed necessary to save the life of a pregnant woman.

Over the years since 1977, various challenges succeeded in watering down the amendment's funding restrictions. In 1993, President Bill Clinton signed the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies permitting the use of federal Medicare funds for abortions resulting from rape or incest. Surprising no one, that Clinton pro-abortion stance took effect in 1994. During subsequent years, several congressional attempts to uphold the original Hyde Amendment restrictions have failed. In 2016, the Democratic Party Platform actually called for the complete repeal of the amendment. The Republican response succeeded in House passage of a measure deemed very strong by abortion opponents but it died with no further congressional support.

After recent stiffening of opposition to abortion in a number of states, leading Democrat nominee for president Joe Biden, a supporter of the Hyde measure during his early years as senator, found himself questioned recently by an ACLU operative in South Carolina. Asked, "Will you commit to abolishing the Hyde Amendment?" his ready response "Yes" was followed by "Right now it has to be — it can't stay." It took two weeks before his campaign staff insisted that he had been confused about the question and still favored the Hyde measure. That response satisfied few. And then on June 6, 2019, Biden announced that he was indeed an opponent of the Hyde Amendment and would, if elected to the presidency, work to get it repealed.

A parade of Democratic aspirants seeking the 2020 presidential nomination seized the opportunity to voice their support for repeal, and to counter Biden's waffling. Bernie Sanders insisted, "Abortion is a



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constitutional right ... we will repeal the Hyde Amendment." Elizabeth Warren told reporters, "The Hyde Amendment should not be American law." Kirsten Gillibrand offered, "Reproductive rights are human rights, period." Kamala Harris joined in with, "No woman's access to reproductive health care should be based on how much money she has."

Biden's record as a U.S. senator from Delaware during the period 2001 to 2008 was 100 percent pro-abortion. In 2005, he voted against our nation's "Mexico City Policy" that prohibits funding to overseas groups that promote abortion. He didn't change an inch when he served as Barack Obama's vice president from 2009 to 2017. Still claiming to be a Catholic, his position regarding abortion mocks what Catholicism has always held.

Nevertheless, Joe Biden will attempt to portray himself as a moderate centrist at any opportunity. But he is not a centrist and all who think he is in the middle of the road are allowing themselves to be deceived. Joe Biden can be trusted only to carry the ball for extreme leftist policy. He has lived up to that description with his most recent complete cave-in on the Hyde Amendment.

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