



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on February 8, 2012

Former Congresswoman Regrets ObamaCare Vote; Unaware of Contraceptive Mandate

Now Dahlkemper, who lost her bid for reelection in 2010 in part because of her vote, says she never would have voted for the bill if she'd known the Obama administration was going to "require all private insurers, including Catholic charities and hospitals, to provide free coverage of contraception, sterilization procedures, and the 'week-after' pill 'ella' that can induce early abortions," the [Weekly Standard](#) reports.



Dahlkemper, a Catholic, had held out for explicit language in the ObamaCare bill banning federal funding of abortion coverage. The language, known as the Stupak-Pitts amendment, had been included in the version of the bill that passed the House of Representatives in November 2009. The Senate, however, rejected similar language (called the Nelson-Hatch amendment) in its version of the bill, and it was therefore not included in the final bill which became law. To secure the votes of the concerned pro-lifers in his party, President Obama issued an executive order supposedly banning federal funding of abortion coverage under the healthcare law. Dahlkemper apparently believed the order would work as advertised — or at least would give her political cover — and voted in favor of the bill.

Of course, even at the time it was obvious that the executive order would neither ban all federal funding of abortion under ObamaCare nor have the force of law that statutory language would. Rep. Joseph Pitts (R-Pa.), one of the authors of the Stupak-Pitts amendment, [noted](#) that the law was "riddled with loopholes that allow taxpayer subsidies for coverage that includes abortion," and the executive order did not close all the loopholes.

Others pointed out that an executive order might not hold up in court and that, in any case, it could easily be changed. "The law of the land trumps any executive order, which can be reversed or altered at the stroke of a pen by this or any subsequent president without any congressional approval or notice," then-House Minority Leader John Boehner (R-Ohio) remarked at the time.



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Despite all this, Dahlkemper and the other pro-lifers “looked the other way and put petty party politics over good, careful lawmaking ... and religious conviction,” observed [Sherman Frederick](#) of the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*.

Now Dahlkemper claims to be shocked that Obama’s Department of Health and Human Services is [forcing Catholic institutions to provide coverage of contraceptives including abortifacients](#). In a November [press release](#) from Democrats for Life of America she was quoted as saying:

I would have never voted for the final version of the bill if I expected the Obama Administration to force Catholic hospitals and Catholic Colleges and Universities to pay for contraception. We worked hard to prevent abortion funding in health care and to include clear conscience protections for those with moral objections to abortion and contraceptive devices that cause abortion. I trust that the President will honor the commitment he made to those of us who supported final passage.

This is, as Frederick put it, a “lame story.” Knowing all she knew about the language in the bill, the weakness of the executive order, and the Obama administration’s determination to see to it that the bill itself did not restrict federal funding of abortion, it is difficult, if not impossible, to believe that Dahlkemper did not foresee that Obama might try to foist abortion coverage on all Americans one way or another. Moreover, if after all the arm-twisting that took place to get her to vote for the bill Dahlkemper still had faith that Obama, who has shamelessly [reversed himself](#) on [numerous occasions](#), would keep his end of the bargain as she understood it, she can only be described as incredibly naïve. Indeed, recent events — in which the administration has dug in its heels on the contraception mandate and even insisted that it’s a good thing because, in White House Press Secretary [Jay Carney’s](#) words, “American women deserve to have access to that kind of insurance coverage regardless of where they work” — suggest that the faith Dahlkemper expressed in Obama as late as last November was greatly misplaced.

Unfortunately, Dahlkemper’s naiveté — or, as a cynic might contend, her political expedience — helped saddle America with the monstrosity of ObamaCare, which even without the abortion issues would be a disaster in the making. Pleading ignorance of Obama’s intentions with regard to one portion of the law hardly excuses a vote in favor of a plainly unconstitutional, 2,000-page mishmash of mandates. Fortunately, voters have seen to it that Dahlkemper won’t be in a position to make a similar mistake in the future.

Photo of Kathy Dahlkemper: AP Images



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