

DISHONESTY MARKS HEALTH CARE DEBATE

Sen. Max Baucus, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, was quoted in the October 1 *New York Times* commenting on allegations that abortion would be covered in the health care bill: "We are not changing current law." Similarly, Sen. Olympia Snowe was quoted in the same newspaper saying, "We want to preserve the status quo on abortion." Interestingly, the *Times* wrote an editorial that same day which called for total funding of abortion for any reason and at any time during pregnancy, but which also disagreed with what Baucus and Snowe said. Indeed, it explicitly said that Baucus achieved a "compromise" between full funding and no funding.

The following is a quote from the editorial: "Health plans could provide abortion coverage provided they used only premium money and co-payments contributed by beneficiaries and kept that money segregated from the subsidy. In every state, there would have to be at least one plan that covers abortions and one that does not."

Thus, the *New York Times* showed how dishonest Baucus and Snowe were—existing public policy is not anything like that at either the federal or state level. But wait, the *Times* was also dishonest when it maintained that by some magical force monies raised from premiums can be "segregated" from the subsidy: money is fungible and that is why the United States bishops are right to call such schemes fiction.

The day before these stories appeared in the *Times*, Sen. Orrin Hatch introduced an amendment that essentially codified the status quo, namely it would ensure that the Hyde Amendment restrictions on federal funds for most abortions remained undisturbed in the proposed health care legislation. And who voted against the status quo? Baucus and Snowe. Consistent in

their dishonesty, Baucus and Snowe also voted to kill conscience rights protections for health care workers, all the while maintaining that what they were doing was preserving the status quo. What they were really doing was preserving their place in the Abortion Hall of Shame.