

DISHONESTY MARKS HEALTH CARE DEBATE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue addresses the dishonesty that marks the debate over health care reform:

Sen. Max Baucus, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, is quoted in today's *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 is quoted in the same newspaper as saying, "We want to preserve the status quo on abortion." Interestingly, there is an editorial in today's *New York Times* which calls for total funding of abortion for any reason and at any time during pregnancy, but which also disagrees with what Baucus and Snowe said. Indeed, it explicitly says that Baucus achieved a "compromise" between full funding and no funding.

Here's what the editorial says: "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* shows how dishonest Baucus and Snowe are—existing public policy is not anything like that at either the federal or state level. But wait, the *Times* is also being dishonest when it maintains that by some magical force monies raised from premiums can be "segregated" from the subsidy: money is fungible and that is why the bishops are right to call such schemes a fiction.

It gets worse. Yesterday, Sen. Orrin Hatch introduced an amendment that essentially codifies 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.