

HEALTH CARE BILL: FREEDOM OF CHOICE ACT BY OTHER MEANS?

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the proposed health care legislation favored by the Obama administration:

On July 17, 2007, President Obama told his pro-abortion fans at Planned Parenthood that "the first thing I'd do as president is sign the Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA)." Two years later, FOCA has yet to be reintroduced. But there are no signs that Planned Parenthood is disappointed, and that's because Obama is delivering FOCA by stealth.

The principal reason why FOCA was not reintroduced was due to opposition from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). Under the tutelage of Francis Cardinal George, head of the USCCB, and Justin Cardinal Rigali, head of the pro-life committee of the USCCB, the bishops made it clear that they would fight tooth and nail any attempt to get FOCA signed into law. Obama got the word, as did the bill's sponsors, Rep. Jerry Nadler and Sen. Barbara Boxer. But that didn't derail the pro-abortion forces from trying some back door maneuvering.

The USCCB believes, as does the Obama administration, that health care is a human right. The health care bills that have been served up by supporters of Obama, however, have provisions that mirror the most draconian elements found in FOCA. To be specific, in the past week, an amendment by Sen. Mike Enzi explicitly denying abortion coverage was defeated. When Sen. Orrin Hatch asked Sen. Barbara Mikulski if she would clarify her amendment so that abortion services would not be mandated, she said no; the amendment passed.

In other words, stealth politics is at work. No, FOCA is not

on the table, but central provisions of it have made their way into the health care reform bills. What is most disturbing about all of this is that the public is being hoodwinked: most have no idea of the games that are being played. All the more reason why a national discussion on this issue needs to begin immediately.