

OBAMA MUST END ABORTION DEBATE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue weighed in on the growing debate among pro-life Catholics regarding President Obama's position on abortion coverage in the health care reform bill:

Richard Doerflinger, a prominent voice for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops on life issues, welcomes President Obama's pledge not to include abortion coverage in the health care reform bill. He is joined by Sister Carol Keehan, who heads the Catholic Health Association.

On the other hand, people like Father Frank Pavone of Priests for Life maintain that Obama's proclamations represent "bogus claims." Also unconvinced are such organizations as the National Right to Life Committee and the Susan B. Anthony List, as well as pro-life congressmen like Rep. Chris Smith. Independent journalists like Dan Gilgoff are also wary of Obama's commitment, holding that "On abortion—and for the moment—the White House isn't budging at all."

This isn't a split between social justice Catholics and pro-life Catholics, or between secularists and people of faith. This is a divide within the pro-life Catholic community. All of the aforementioned are men and women of sincerity, and all of them are well informed.

So what gives? On closer inspection, the chasm isn't as wide as it seems. None of these leaders will support a bill that includes federal funding for abortion. The split comes down to the issue of trust: Can we expect the president to deliver on a health care bill that excludes public monies for abortion?

There is only one person who can settle the issue, and that is President Obama. Eventually, the divide will end and the pro-

life Catholic community will unite once again. It's time the Obama administration provided the kind of clarity and specificity that will end this debate.