



*Pro-Life Activities*

UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**BISHOPS URGE SENATE TO REMOVE ABORTION AMENDMENT FROM DEFENSE BILL**

WASHINGTON—A Senate committee amendment that would authorize the performance of elective abortions at military hospitals in this country and around the world is “misguided” and should be removed from the National Defense Authorization Act (S. 3454), said the Chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities. In a June 29 letter, Cardinal Daniel DiNardo of Galveston-Houston urged Senators to remove this amendment on the grounds that it breaks with longstanding federal and military policies on government promotion of abortion.

Cardinal DiNardo said it was disingenuous to suggest, as the amendment’s proponents have, that the amendment is “moderate” in requiring patients at military facilities to pay for their abortions. “Which is a more direct governmental involvement in abortion: That the government reimburses someone else for having done an abortion, or that the government *performs the abortion itself* and accepts payment for doing so?” the Cardinal wrote. He cited a 1989 ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court saying that “the State need not commit any resources to facilitating abortions, even if it can turn a profit by doing so.”

Cardinal DiNardo also noted the longstanding nature of the current policy against providing abortions at military health facilities, which has been in place for 22 years with the exception of 1993-1995.

“During the brief period when these facilities were told to make abortions available, scarcely any military physician could be found in overseas facilities who was willing to perform abortions,” the Cardinal added.

Cardinal DiNardo also said that the current military policy is in keeping with federal policy in general, noting: “Other federal health facilities also may not be used for elective abortions, and many states have their own laws against use of public facilities for such abortions.”

Calling on the Senate not to approve the bill unless it maintains current law, as the bill approved by the House of Representatives already does, Cardinal DiNardo concluded that “this amendment presents Congress with the very straightforward question whether it is the task of our federal government to directly promote and facilitate elective abortions. During the recent health care reform debate, the President and congressional leadership assured us that they agree it is not.”

Archbishop Broglio of the Archdiocese of Military Services had written an earlier letter to the Senate against the proposed policy change. Cardinal DiNardo endorsed his letter as well, noting that it urges Congress “not to impose this tremendous burden on the consciences of Catholic and other health care personnel who joined our armed services to save and protect innocent life, not to destroy it.”

Full text of the letter can be found online at: [www.usccb.org/prolife/DiNardo-Ltr-Military-Abortions-6-29-2010.pdf](http://www.usccb.org/prolife/DiNardo-Ltr-Military-Abortions-6-29-2010.pdf)

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