



DATE: June 30, 2009
FROM: Don Clemmer
O: 202-541-3206
M: 260-580-1137

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

*Public funding of abortion rejected by Americans
Lawmakers cannot both fund abortion and claim to reduce abortions
'Worst of all times' to inject the divisive issue of abortion funding*

CARDINAL RIGALI PROTESTS MOVE TO FUND ABORTION IN DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

WASHINGTON—Cardinal Justin Rigali of Philadelphia, chair of the Committee on Pro-Life Activities for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, wrote to members of the House Appropriations Committee today urging them not to fund abortions in the District of Columbia. Last week the House subcommittee considering the Financial Services appropriations bill for 2010 voted to permit direct public funding of abortion in the nation's capital.

Cardinal Rigali said that the subcommittee's action "effectively nullifies the Dornan amendment," which for a total of 18 years has prevented public funding of elective abortions in the District. He said this move, "presumably the first step in a broader effort to restore such funding throughout the federal government," is misguided for three reasons.

"First, public funding of abortion is rejected by the American people, as numerous surveys of public opinion have shown," Cardinal Rigali said. He also noted that Catholics recently sent "tens of millions of postcards to their elected representatives in Congress, opposing...any weakening or reversal of current appropriations riders on abortion."

"Second, no lawmaker or Administration can support such a policy change and still claim to support 'reducing abortions.' The evidence is overwhelming, and universally recognized by groups on all sides of the abortion issue, that the availability of public funds for abortion greatly *increases* abortions," the bishops' Pro-Life Committee Chair argued.

"Third, this action takes place as Congress is working to win broad support for a much-needed major reform of our health care system," Cardinal Rigali noted. "This is the worst of all possible times to be injecting the divisive issue of public abortion funding into the debate on government health policy."

Cardinal Rigali concluded by urging the full House Appropriations Committee to reverse the subcommittee's action and retain the funding ban in current law. The full text of his letter is available at: www.usccb.org/prolife/Rigali-DornanAmendment-2009.pdf.

---Keywords: Cardinal Rigali, USCCB, pro-life, Archdiocese of Washington, abortion, abortion funding, women's health, abortion reduction, abortion rate, common ground

#####

09-152
DD,SEC,CNS,RNS,Crux

USCCB Pro-Life Secretariat