# Deal Hudson's Deceitful Bogeyman

by Michael Sean Winters

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I suppose desperate times call for desperate measures. It is fast becoming obvious that health care reform, in some form, is going to pass Congress and become law. So conservative Republicans, including conservative Catholic Republicans, are mounting last ditch efforts to scuttle the legislation. The most recent was posted by Deal Hudson over at InsideCatholic.com.

Hudson argues that the public option will end up extending federal funding for abortion. He says that the courts will step in even if Congress doesn?t mandate abortion coverage in any such plan. Mind you, the courts have not stepped in to over-rule the Hyde Amendment lo these many years. The federal health insurance coverage that members of Congress enjoy does not include abortion coverage. Federal Medicaid funds do not support abortion. So, why would the federal option, which would be modeled after the insurance that members of Congress get, necessarily end up mandating abortion coverage? Hudson does not say.

Actually, I can think of one scenario in which this could happen. If the USCCB follows Hudson?s lead and opposes health care legislation that includes a public option that does not include abortion coverage, their moral voice will have been so weakened that perhaps they will not be able to perpetuate the Hyde Amendment or its health care corollary.

We are all waiting to see what the final legislation looks like. The bishops are right to insist that no federal dollars go to cover abortion: The Hyde Amendment is nearly as settled law as is Roe. But, creating fear about what might happen when nothing of the sort has happened in the 32 years that the Hyde Amendment has been on the books is disingenuous in the extreme.

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