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Federal dollars and abortion

by Phyllis Zagano

Just Catholic

Remember when folks used to get arrested demonstrating against abortion? Now they get arrested demonstrating for it. The latest teledrama: the mayor of Washington, D.C., wants to spend his federal budget dollars on abortion. Hello? It's the District of Columbia, a federal territory and the permanent national capital provided for in the Constitution.

Mayor Vincent Gray pulled out the old saw -- "poor people deserve abortions too" -- in an effort to overcome restrictions keeping federal money out of abortionists' hands.

Sorry, Mayor Gray, you are a thousand percent wrong.

No federal entity is entitled to one nickel of anyone's taxes for abortion. That translates to no Medicaid funded abortions, no abortions in military hospitals, no abortions in federal prisons, and no abortions by the Indian Health Service.

So, Mr. Mayor, keep your hands off my taxes. That includes my income tax, my social security tax, and my Medicare tax. And let's not forget any customs duties, and federal excise taxes on alcohol, tobacco, tires, gasoline, diesel fuel, coal, firearms, telephone service, and airplane tickets.

I do not want to participate in abortion. That means the euphemistically-termed "abortion services" of referrals, morning-after pills, and chemically-induced or surgical abortions.

Anyone who's not been under a rock the past 30 years knows abortion-on-demand is the law of the land. But that does not mean I have to pay for it.

Of course the D.C. fracas reflects what is going on in the Congress. A while back, the House passed the

Pence Amendment to the foundering federal budget bill. The amendment defunds Planned Parenthood, the nation's largest abortionist. Soon Planned Parenthood funding will be voted on separately by the Senate. Unfortunately, it probably will pass.

Yes, I know the mantra -- health care services for poor women -- but who are we kidding? Planned Parenthood seems to list its four main services in this order: abortion, birth control, morning after pill, and treatment for sexually transmitted diseases. It performs an astronomical number of abortions -- 332,278 in the year ending June 2009 -- over a quarter of all the abortions in the U.S.

Planned Parenthood also tends to concentrate its clinics near college campuses and in poor neighborhoods, intending to use my tax money in each. Both marketing strategies make me sick.

Years ago, I passed a young college couple near an abortion clinic in Boston. I don't know if it was a Planned Parenthood place, but I knew they did abortions there. I will never forget the looks in their eyes. I wanted to grab them, shake them, and say "don't do it, you will ruin your lives." I did not say anything. It haunts me even now. I think of them from time to time, especially when abortion arguments pop up in the news.

Then there is Planned Parenthood near the slums. That Planned Parenthood plunks itself down in poor neighborhoods carries forward its historic interest in human eugenics. When Planned Parenthood's founder Margaret Sanger started the American Birth Control League in 1921, one of her goals was to curb births among the "Italian vermin" in Brooklyn. Then, in 1939 she initiated the "Negro Project," designed to limit births among poor blacks. From 1952-1959 Sanger was president of the International Planned Parenthood Federation.

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Did women suffer from bad advice -- or no advice -- in the half-century that spawned Planned Parenthood? Of course. Did women die from self-inflicted abortions? Yes.

But Planned Parenthood and its predecessors had one underlying goal: root out the "undesirables" from society and create a purer race. In retrospect their theories are indistinguishable from those of Hitler.

The history and current trajectory of Planned Parenthood is such that I cannot fathom why anyone would grant it federal dollars. But that is what some of the budget debate is about. President Obama says in his most noble voice he does not want the budget held hostage to ideology, yet that is exactly what has been going on. The budget was held hostage to his ideology.

The measure passed by the House of Representatives is in keeping with other federal regulations and the will of the people. The House Pence Amendment diverts women's health funding from Planned Parenthood to organizations that do not provide abortion. Planned Parenthood has mandated each of its affiliates have an abortion clinic within two years. It is pretty clear what direction they want to carry federal moneybags in.

I think the Senate will fund Planned Parenthood, caving in the face of huge and well-funded pro-abortion lobby efforts. What to do? While the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' pro-life staff is terrific, individual bishops are generally useless here. What member of Congress can side with one of them on anything? It is all terribly upsetting.

If you'll excuse me, I have to go call my senator.

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