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## *House of Representatives*

### Vote No on Grayson Amendment

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey... Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from Florida for his extraordinary leadership on this bill and on the life issue.

Mr. Chairman, on June 8, 1983, 33 years ago, I sponsored the amendment to ban the use of taxpayer funds to subsidize abortion in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program. The Smith amendment passed 226 to 182, and has been in effect almost continuously ever since.

Today, more Americans oppose taxpayer funding for abortions than ever before. A January 2016 Marist poll found a supermajority of Americans— 68 percent of all respondents and 69 percent of women—oppose taxpayer funding for abortion.

Why do Americans continue to trend pro-life?

First, the pro-life movement is comprised of millions of selfless, compassionate human rights defenders, women and men, filled with deep faith in God, hope, love, and indomitable spirits.

Second, post-abortive women are silent no more, courageously speaking to the extraordinary harm they have endured from abortion. As the NGO Feminists for Life have

reminded us, women deserve better than abortion.

Third, sonograms, ultrasound imagery, is a game changer. Countless parents have watched with awe and wonder as their child appears on the screen, moving about, even sucking his or her thumb. First baby pictures today are of the child before birth. That first picture is a powerful confirmation that their child exists and that they are parents now and that birth is merely an event in the life of a child.

Ultrasounds have also been an effective tool in helping to diagnose and to treat disease and disability for these young patients. Some unborn children indeed are the youngest patients in need of benign interventions.

I would note to my colleagues that for the past several years, there has been a global movement called The First Thousand Days of Life, providing for nutrition and supplementation to bolster the health and wellness of children and women from conception until the second birthday. The consequences of caring for children before birth is absolutely revolutionary and breathtaking, boosting their immunity as well as their cognitive abilities throughout their entire lifetime.

Abortion, on the other hand, is the polar opposite of life. It is violence against children. Abortion methods dismember, decapitate, or chemically poison innocent babies to death. Laterterm abortions inflict excruciating pain and suffering on the child, especially during the dismemberment procedure.

The Grayson amendment would reverse over three decades of prudent public policy that ensures that taxpayers do not subsidize abortion. I would note parenthetically that the law governing the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program specifies that the Federal Government contributes at least 72 percent of the average premium cost for all plans, so it is taxpayers who are footing the bill.

Vote “no” on the Grayson amendment.