

# House Votes to Lock In Pro-Life Foreign Aid Policies

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**WASHINGTON** (July 7) - - Pro-life forces won a major victory on the first abortion-related vote of the 1989-90 Congress, as the House of Representatives voted to continue current policies prohibiting funding of organizations which promote abortion in foreign countries.

The decisive 229 to 163 vote represents a serious setback for the Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) and its allies, which have lobbied hard to regain funding for the pro-abortion organizations.

Beginning early in the year, NRLC had led the lobbying battle to preserve the pro-life policies.

The showdown came on June 22, when Congressman Chris Smith (R-NJ), the co-chairman of the Congressional Pro-Life Caucus, and Congressman Henry Hyde (R-IL), offered a two-part amendment to the foreign aid authorization bill (HR 2655).

The first part of the Smith/Hyde Amendment would write the "Mexico City Policy" into permanent federal law.

The Mexico City Policy -- adopted by President Reagan in 1984 and continued by President Bush -- denies U.S. "population assistance" funds to organizations which promote abortion or lobby to legalize abortion in foreign countries.

Because of the Mexico City Policy, the London-based International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) has received no U.S. funds since 1985.

IPPF aggressively campaigns to repeal the pro-life laws which remain in effect in most less-developed countries. According to **The New York Times** (Feb. 27), as a direct result of the Mexico City Policy there has been "a near halt in the liberalization of abortion laws in third world countries."

The second part of the Smith/Hyde Amendment would write into permanent law the "Kemp/Kasten" restriction, which has been enacted as part of the foreign aid appropriations bill, for each year since 1985. This provision denies population assistance funds to organizations which support programs of coercive abortion. The Smith/Hyde Amendment, if enacted into law, would make it unnecessary to renew this provision every year.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has received no U.S. funds since 1985, because that agency's support for China's coercive population control program violates the Kemp/Kasten law. [See "Bush Administration Turns Thumbs Down on China/U.N. Population Policies," June 22 **NRL News**, page 1.]

### **Kostmayer Amendment**

After Rep. Smith offered the amendment on the House floor, pro-abortion Congressman Peter Kostmayer (D-Pa.) proposed an amendment to add the words "to the extent this is consistent with U.S. law" to the Smith/Hyde Amendment.

As accurately reported by the authoritative **Congressional Quarterly** (June



Rep. Chris Smith, (R-NJ)

Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision allowing abortions in the United States."

In other words, the legal effect of the Kostmayer Amendment was to require the President to fund even those organizations which actively promote abortion in nations in which abortion is illegal -- since the organizations would be allowed to operate in accord with permissive "U.S. law," rather than the pro-life laws of the host nations. Thus, if enacted, the Kostmayer Amendment would have entirely nullified the Mexico City Policy.

After a short debate, the House rejected the Kostmayer Amendment 229 to 163 -- a 66-vote margin. [See roll call, page x.] Because it was clearly understood by both sides that the vote on the Kostmayer Amendment amounted to decisive approval of the Mexico City Policy, the House then immediately adopted the Smith/Hyde Amendment on a voice vote.

The pro-life victory greatly enhances the prospects for preventing the weakening of the pro-life policies by Congress. However, the battle is not yet over. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee is currently considering its version of the foreign aid bill, which contains language which would overturn the Mexico City Policy, sponsored by pro-abortion Sen. Nancy Kassebaum (R-Ks.). If the committee and the full Senate approve the Kassebaum language, a House/Senate conference committee would have to resolve the conflict between the two houses.

The issue may also arise on the foreign aid appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 1990, which must be enacted by October 1.

Pro-life forces are hopeful that President Bush will use the threat of a veto to back up the House's pro-Mexico City Policy position -- as he was urged to do in a June 13 letter signed by 154 House members. [See "Pro-Life Vetos Will Be Sustained, 154 House Members Promise Bush," June 22 **NRL News**, page 1.]

While the President has not yet responded to the letter, he spoke of the Mexico City Policy in a videotaped address shown at the National Right to Life Convention in Minneapolis on June 29.