

## THE CORNER

## POLITICS &amp; POLICY

# Poll: Strong Majority of Americans Back the Hyde Amendment

By JOHN MCCORMACK | January 29, 2021 3:47 PM



A pro-life demonstrator holds up a mock human fetus, as groups chant over one another outside of the U.S. Supreme Court on Capitol Hill in Washington, March 4, 2020. (Tom Brenner/Reuters)

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A new **Marist Poll** sponsored by the Knights of Columbus asks Americans: “Please tell me if you strongly support, support, oppose, or strongly oppose using tax dollars to pay for a woman’s abortion.” Fifty-eight percent of Americans say they oppose taxpayer funding of abortion, while 38 percent support it. Those numbers are broadly consistent with polling on the Hyde

amendment in recent years. In 2016, a *Politico/Harvard* poll found that likely voters oppose Medicaid funding of abortion by a 22-point margin — 58 percent to 36 percent.

President Biden this week rescinded the Mexico City Policy, so groups that perform or promote abortion overseas can once again receive funding for contraceptive programs from U.S. taxpayers. Pro-life Americans have long opposed the use of taxpayer dollars that subsidize abortionists, but keeping the Hyde amendment has been an even greater priority because direct funding of abortion procedures has **greater impact on the number of lives lost to abortion:**



Protecting conscience rights is indeed a weighty reason to support the Hyde amendment, but there is an even better reason to do so. What makes it the most important pro-life public policy since the Supreme Court's 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision is this: When you subsidize something, you get more of it, and this basic fact of social science holds true when that something is abortion.

One study by the Guttmacher Institute, a Planned Parenthood offshoot, found that in states that use their own tax dollars to pay for abortions undergone by Medicaid recipients, the abortion rate among Medicaid

recipients is 3.9 times the rate among nonrecipients, “while in states that do not permit Medicaid funding for abortions, Medicaid recipients are only 1.6 times as likely as nonrecipients to have abortions.”

The precise number of lives saved by the Hyde amendment is a matter of dispute, but according to a 2016 report by the Charlotte Lozier Institute, an organization affiliated with the pro-life Susan B. Anthony List, “the best research indicates that the Hyde Amendment has saved over two million unborn children” since the policy was first enacted in 1976.

That’s an average of 50,000 human lives saved from abortion each year.

Ruth Bader Ginsburg acknowledged in a 2009 interview that a major rationale for funding abortions for Medicaid recipients was that it would result in a culling of the poor, though she put it a bit more euphemistically. “Frankly, I had thought that at the time Roe was decided, there was concern about population growth and particularly growth in populations that we don’t want to have too many of,” she said. “So that Roe was going to be then set up for Medicaid funding of abortion.” For that reason, the liberal Supreme Court justice said she was surprised that the Supreme Court did not strike down the Hyde amendment in the 1980 case *Harris v. McRae*.

While the House appropriations chair is pushing forward to scrap the Hyde amendment in 2021, one former pro-life Democratic congressman, Dan Lipinski of Illinois, is **doubtful** Speaker Pelosi has the votes in the narrowly divided House to kill the pro-life policy.

In the Senate, two Democrats have committed to keeping the 60-vote threshold for legislation, including spending bills that fund Medicaid. But it remains to be seen whether a simple majority of Senate Democrats, under complex budget reconciliation rules, will find a way to fund abortion. West Virginia Democratic senator Joe Manchin told NATIONAL REVIEW in December that killing “the Hyde amendment would be foolish and I’m strongly opposed to this push from some Members of Congress,” but Manchin hasn’t commented on whether he supports a “public option” for health insurance that would cover elective abortion.



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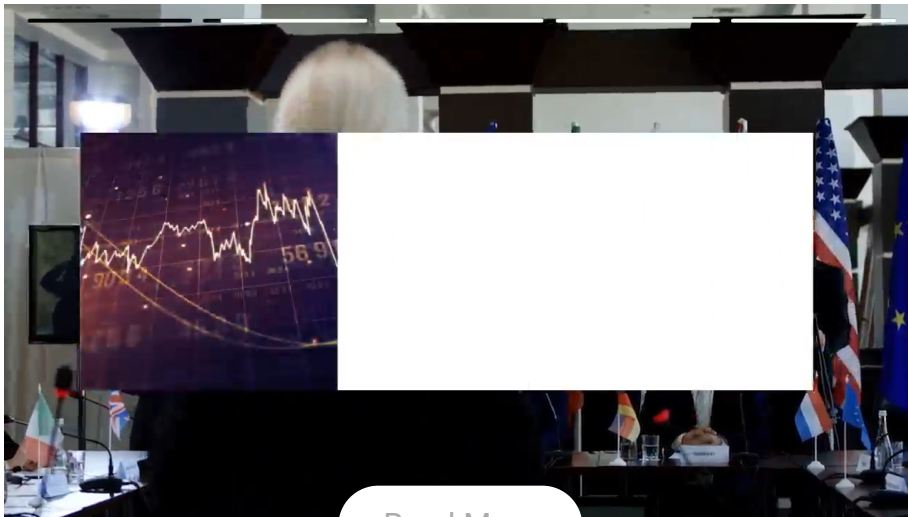
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