

# **Naumann: Biden action on Title X makes abortion part of family planning program**

WASHINGTON (CNS) – President Joe Biden’s decision to rescind a regulation governing the Title X family planning program that was enforced by the Trump administration “will force abortion” to be part of the program and “may be unlawful,” said the chairman of the U.S. bishops’ pro-life committee.

Started in 1970, the Title X Family Planning Program is a federal grant program for low-income patients to receive family planning and reproductive health services. It funds services including contraception, testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections, and breast and cervical cancer screenings.

In February 2019, the Trump administration implemented the “Protect Life Rule” that enforces the Title X rule banning taxpayer funds from being used to promote or provide abortion as family planning. On Feb 24, 2020, The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the rule that Biden is revoking.

“Although the Catholic bishops have grave concerns about government promotion of contraceptives, we have long supported efforts to ensure that the provision and promotion of abortion is kept physically and financially out of the pre-pregnancy family planning services provided through the Title X program,” said Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kansas, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities.

“Abortion takes the life of an already-conceived and growing child, and most Americans agree that abortion should not be used as a method of family planning or as a ‘back up’ for failed family planning,” he said in a statement Jan. 29.

A day earlier Biden announced he was rescinding the Trump-era rule in his “Presidential Memorandum to Protect and Expand Access to Comprehensive Reproductive Health Care,” which included his actions to rescind the “Mexico City policy” and other provisions.

The Trump administration rule reaffirmed that abortion “is not family planning.”

Section 1008 of the Family Planning Services and Population Research Act of 1970, which enacted Title X, states that “none of the funds appropriated under this title shall be used in programs where abortion is a method of family planning.”

In August 2019, Planned Parenthood Federation of America announced it was withdrawing from the federal Title X program over the rule and like other opponents of the policy called it a “gag rule.” It received \$60 million of the \$286 million allocated annually through Title X.

Biden said in his memo: “The act specifies that Title X funds may not be used in programs where abortion is a method of family planning, but places no further abortion-related restrictions on recipients of Title X funds.”

Under President Donald Trump, Biden said, the Department of Health and Human Services’ implementation of the “Protect Life Rule” “prohibits recipients of Title X funds from referring patients to abortion providers and imposes other onerous requirements on abortion providers.”

“The Title X rule has caused the termination of federal family planning funding for many women’s health care providers and puts women’s health at risk by making it harder for women to receive complete medical information,” he added.

But in his statement, Archbishop Naumann said by enforcing the rule, Title X “draws a bright line between abortion and family planning.”

"In addition to the program explicitly prohibiting taxpayer funding for abortion, its authors further emphasized this intent by stating that 'the funds authorized under this legislation (shall) be used only to support preventive family planning services, population research, infertility services, and other related medical, informational and educational activities,'" the archbishop said.

"By rescinding this rule, the administration will be forcing abortion into a pre-pregnancy program specifically designed to exclude abortion; a move which is immoral, impractical and may also be unlawful," he added.