

New rule allowing Title X funds for abortion called 'offensive' to millions

WASHINGTON (CNS) – The Biden administration's decision to allow Title X family planning funds go to health facilities that perform and promote abortion "is offensive to tens of millions of Americans," said the president of National Right to Life.

"The vast majority of Americans believe that using taxpayer funds to pay for abortion is wrong," Carol Tobias said in a statement.

Her comments came in a statement released late Oct. 4 in response to the Biden administration's announcement that it had officially reversed the Trump-era "Protect Life Rule" enforcing Title X's ban on taxpayer funds from being used to promote or provide elective abortions.

Title X, enacted by the Family Planning Services and Population Research Act of 1970, covers reproductive health care services for low-income patients such as wellness exams, cervical and breast cancer screenings, contraceptives, and testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections.

Section 1008 of the law states that "none of the funds appropriated under this title shall be used in programs where abortion is a method of family planning."

In February 2019, the Trump administration implemented its rule to enforce Section 1008, and the rule was upheld by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals Feb 24, 2020.

On Jan. 28, eight days after he was inaugurated, President Joe Biden announced he would rescind the Trump-era rule.

He stated this in his “Presidential Memorandum to Protect and Expand Access to Comprehensive Reproductive Health Care,” which also included his actions to rescind the “Mexico City policy,” which blocked U.S. funding for nongovernmental organizations that perform or actively promote abortion as a form of family planning in other nations.

Biden, a Catholic who supports legal abortion, said the “Protect Life Rule” placed “onerous requirements on abortion providers.”

On April 15, the Department of Health and Human Services published the administration’s proposed rule in the Federal Register, opening a 30-day period for public comment.

The Title X provision enforced by President Donald Trump “draws a bright line between abortion and family planning,” the chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities said in April 16 statement.

The Biden administration’s proposed rule to rescind this “is terrible policy,” said Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kansas, the chairman. “It would reintegrate abortion into what is supposed to be a pre-pregnancy family planning program.”

“In spite of explicit prohibitions in federal law and clear congressional intent that abortion may not be a part of this program, it has repeatedly been coopted by abortion supporters as a funding stream for organizations, programs and facilities that directly promote and provide abortions,” the archbishop said.

He called on Biden “to suspend this proposed rule and leave the Title X program as it was intended and authorized to be – a program entirely separate from abortion.”

In announcing the rule reversal, HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra said Oct. 4: “Today more than ever, we are making clear that

access to quality family planning care includes accurate information and referrals – based on a patient’s needs and direction.”

Tobias said in her statement that “far from uniting this nation, the Biden administration has done everything it can to divide it by facilitating abortion on demand.”

A day after Biden announced his intention to reverse the Trump-era Title X rule, Archbishop Naumann noted in a Jan. 29 statement that in addition to “explicitly prohibiting taxpayer funding for abortion,” the original authors of Title X “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.’”