



The National Catholic Bioethics Center

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Bioethics and Public Policy Report [Click on Endnotes for More Information]

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The National Scene: On Tuesday, January 4, *Dr. John M. Haas*, NCBC President was notified by Archbishop Zygmunt Zimowski, President of the *Pontifical Council for Health Care Workers*, that the Holy Father had appointed him a Consultor to the Council. In 2006 Pope Benedict XVI appointed Dr. Haas as an Ordinary Member of the Pontifical Academy for Life and then in June 2010 named him to the eight member Governing Council of the Academy.¹ • On January 20, three new *bills on important pro-life issues* were introduced into Congress: The No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act (H.R. 3), the Protect Life Act (H.R. 358), and the Abortion Non-Discrimination Act (H.R. 361). An Action Alert has been made available concerning these proposals. See: <http://nchla.org/actiondisplay.asp?ID=286>; <http://nchla.org/actiondisplay.asp?ID=287>; <http://www.usccb.org/comm/archives/2011/11-021.shtml>. • On January 5, 2011, the Obama administration rescinded the *advanced care planning* provision from its newly effective (January 1, 2011) *Medicare Regulations*. This provision was not included in the request for public comment in the *Federal Register* in July, but did appear in the final regulation, published in November.² The National Catholic Bioethics Center had responded to the new *Medicare Regulations* as it pertained to this provision.³

The State of Conscience/Religious Liberty: See the federal *important pro-life issues*, above.

The State of Marriage: The United States Supreme Court did not accept the appeal of the decision of the *Washington, DC Human Rights Commission*. The Commission concluded that it would be discriminatory to give citizens a choice to define marriage as a union between a man and a woman. The *District of Columbia* Council approved same-sex marriages in 2009.⁴ • In 2009, an Iowa Supreme Court ruling legalized same sex marriage, thus, legislating from the courts that such unions be recognized legally. The *Iowa Legislature* is advancing a bill to pursue a constitutional amendment which would define marriage as between one man and one woman.⁵ • The *Wyoming Legislature* is advancing legislation that would prohibit recognition of out-of-state homosexual marriages in Wyoming.⁶ At the same time they are considering a proposal to legally recognize civil unions.⁷ • The *Maryland General Assembly* has proposed several bills to legalize same-sex unions in that state.⁸ • Same-sex couples in *Montana* are seeking through the courts civil union or domestic partner status. Montana voters approved a marriage amendment to their constitution in 2004, which defined marriage as between one man and one woman.⁹ • A bill to legalize same-sex civil unions is advancing in Hawaii.¹⁰

State by State: A bill to *restrict abortions* to the period before the fetus can experience pain has been proposed in the *Iowa* Legislature.¹¹ • The *Kansas Legislature* is considering legislation to tighten a ban on *abortions after 22 weeks* gestation.¹² Similarly, *Ohio* is considering a bill to prohibit *post-viability abortions*.¹³ • *Mississippi* voters will have the opportunity to vote on a constitutional amendment to protect the *personhood* of the unborn in November.¹⁴ • The *Wyoming Legislature* defeated a proposal to provide women the option of viewing a *fetal ultrasound* before an abortion.¹⁵ • The *Kentucky Legislature* is advancing a similar bill.¹⁶ That same state allows a minor to have an *abortion without parental consent* if there is a judicial override of parental notification. A *Kentucky Court of Appeal* has ruled that minors from other states can utilize this provision in Kentucky.¹⁷ • The *New Hampshire Legislature* is considering requiring *parental notification* before an abortion on a minor.¹⁸ • The *Vermont Legislature* is considering a proposal to legalize assisted suicide in that state.¹⁹

Recent Good News: *The National Catholic Bioethics Center* welcomes a new intern from the University of Pennsylvania Law School who also is pursuing a double major in bioethics from that university. *Ms. Vivian Lee* is a most competent and articulate scholar, and the daughter of Dallas diaconal candidate, Mr. John Lee and his wife Tammy Lee. Ms. Lee will be interning under the direction of Dr. Marie Hilliard in the area of bioethics and public policy. A warm welcome is extended to Ms. Lee.

Sharing Your Good News and Your Efforts: If there are public policy advocacy strategies which you wish to share with others please e-mail mhilliard@ncbcenter.org.

Sharing of Resources: The web page of the National Catholic Bioethics Center is a significant resource in the realm of bioethics: www.ncbcenter.org. Also, bioethicists are on call twenty-four hours a day, every day of the week, for consultation by calling 215-877-2660.

¹ <http://www.ncbcenter.org/NetCommunity/Page.aspx?pid=482&storyid1277=130&ncs1277=3>.

² <http://ironicsurrealism.blogivists.com/2011/01/05/obama-regime-removes-doctor-reimbursed-advance-care-planning-medicare-death-panel-provision/>.

³ <http://www.ncbcenter.org/NetCommunity/Page.aspx?pid=482&storyid1277=128&ncs1277=3>.

⁴ http://www.nola.com/crime/index.ssf/2011/01/us_supreme_court_rejects_appea.html.

⁵ <http://www.radioiowa.com/2011/01/24/house-committee-endorses-constitutional-amendment-banning-same-sex-marriage/>.

⁶ http://billingsgazette.com/news/state-and-regional/wyoming/article_7e705d97-24f8-5470-a103-ab0c09439882.html.

⁷ http://trib.com/news/state-and-regional/article_b8cd104a-f0ca-5546-a12f-b045f0e5dbd7.html.

⁸ http://weblogs.baltimoresun.com/news/local/politics/2011/01/gay_marriage_legislation_filed.html.

⁹ <http://www.baywindows.com/index.php?ch=news&sc=glbt&sc2=news&sc3=&id=115561>.

¹⁰ http://www.necn.com/01/25/11/Civil-unions-for-gay-couples-debated-in-landing_politics.html?&blockID=3&apID=1a2bcac0f96d44efbe775772342390c4.

¹¹ <http://www.desmoinesregister.com/article/20110105/NEWS10/101050360/-1/ENT05/House-GOP-plans-to-debate-bill-based-on-Nebraska-abortion-law>.

¹² <http://www.kansascity.com/2011/01/11/2577783/conservatives-push-plans-to-restrict.html>.

¹³ http://www.dispatchpolitics.com/live/content/local_news/stories/2011/01/17/copy/ohio-bill-would-ban-late-term-abortions.html?adsec=politics&sid=101.

¹⁴ <http://www.sunherald.com/2011/01/04/2750922/legislature-receives-ballot-initiatives.html>.

¹⁵ http://www.necn.com/01/25/11/House-to-consider-abortion-ultrasound-bi/landing_health.html?&blockID=3&apID=79ab4055dde643ef9f6515aecdcd0000.

¹⁶ <http://www.lifenews.com/2011/01/06/kentucky-committee-approves-pre-abortion-ultrasound-bill/>.

¹⁷ <http://www.lifenews.com/2011/01/17/kentucky-court-decision-allows-secret-abortions-in-teen-girls/>.

¹⁸ <http://www.lifenews.com/2011/01/14/new-hampshire-to-consider-parental-notification-on-abortion/>.

¹⁹ <http://www.lifenews.com/2011/01/24/vermont-bill-to-legalize-assisted-suicide-has-huge-loopholes/>.