



THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC BIOETHICS CENTER

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Bioethics and Public Policy Report

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The National Scene: The *US Food and Drug Administration* is considering the approval of *ulipristal (ellaOne)* as an 'emergency contraception' drug.¹ However, this drug blocks progesterone receptors in a manner identical to RU-486, and it can be taken up to five days post intercourse; thus the drug can function as an abortifacient. An advisory panel to the *US FDA* has voted to recommend the approval of *ellaOne* for use as an emergency contraceptive in the United States.² Excellent testimony opposing the approval of *Ulipristal* was provided by the *American Association of Pro Life Obstetricians & Gynecologists* (see http://www.aaplog.org/?page_id=839) • The military defense funding bill contains provisions to allow military servicewomen to obtain abortions at military hospitals if they use private funds.³

The State of Conscience/Religious Liberty: A physician/faculty from a New York *Catholic university* has published in the periodical of the *Catholic Health Association* in support of *Plan B* as an emergency contraceptive in cases of sexual assault. This same physician provided similar information concerning *Plan B* at a hearing on proposed *Ohio* legislation mandating a sexual assault treatment protocol. This testimony was given at the request of the legislator/proponent of proposed *Ohio* legislation, mandating the administration of emergency contraception (defined as also including abortifacient "devices") for sexual assault victims.⁴ With the apparent imminent approval *ellaOne*, clearly with abortifacient properties, it is incredibly short-sighted to jeopardize rights of conscience by supporting any such legal mandates. • For states facing proposed legislation on *MOST/POLST (Physician Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment)*, the *Colorado Catholic Conference*, while unable to support the final piece of legislation, was able to secure some very helpful amendments.⁵

The State of Marriage: Despite the existence of a federal *DOMA (Defense of Marriage Act)* *President Obama* signed an executive order providing a number of *same-sex partner benefits* to federal employees.⁶

State by State: A bill banning human-animal hybrid *cloning* was passed in the *Ohio Senate*.⁷ • The Governor of *Oklahoma* vetoed legislation that required persons, who seek elective abortion insurance coverage, to pay a separate premium for such coverage.⁸ • *Florida's* Governor Crist vetoed legislation allowing Florida to opt out of some of the provisions in the federal health care reform legislation that would fund abortions, as well as requiring the opportunity for mother's seeking an abortion to view a *fetal ultrasound*.⁹ • The *Alaska Supreme Court* upheld the legality of the ballot initiative on *parental notification for abortion*, despite challenges by *Planned Parenthood*.¹⁰

Recent Good News: A *Connecticut court* dismissed a law suit challenging a state law prohibiting *assisted suicide*. An appeal by the petitioners is expected.¹¹ •

Massachusetts drivers soon will have the opportunity to access *choose life* license plates.¹²

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.lifesitenews.com/ldn/2010/jun/10060211.html>.

² <http://www.catholic.org/politics/story.php?id=37058>.

³ <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2010/06/09/democrats-seek-lift-ban-abortion-military-hospitals-abroad/>.

⁴ http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/analysis.cfm?ID=128_HB_333&ACT=As%20Introduced&hf=analyses128/h0333-i-128.htm#_ftnref1;

http://blog.cleveland.com/letters/2010/06/enact_ohio_law_to_ensure_compa.html;

http://www.ohiolife.org/base.cfm?page_id=1744.

⁵ For more information contact Jenny Kraska, Executive Director, Colorado Catholic Conference, 1535 Logan Street, Denver, CO 80203, 303-894-8808.

⁶ <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/06/02/AR2010060204654.html>.

⁷ <http://www.lifenews.com/bio3107.html>.

⁸ <http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5gN0Ufc6xuI3YRfJtMegelAkR5JcwD9FUVVU01>.

⁹ <http://www.lifenews.com/state5183.html>.

¹⁰ <http://www.lifenews.com/state5153.html>.

¹¹ <http://www.lifenews.com/bio3111.html>.

¹² <http://www.lifenews.com/state5180.html>.