



The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington

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Statement in Opposition to Proposed Supplemental Appropriation #23-9, Assistance to Access Abortion, Reproductive Health, and Related Services, \$1,000,000 Montgomery County Council, July 26, 2002

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington, which encompasses Montgomery County¹, promotes and supports those programs which uplift the dignity of each person, advance justice and the common good, and encourage our society to pursue its highest values and ideals (see *Evangelii Gaudium*, 241; Catechism of the Catholic Church 1926). Accordingly, the Archdiocese strongly opposes Supplemental Appropriation #23-9, Assistance to Access Abortion, Reproductive Health, and Related Services, \$1,000,000.

These taxpayer funds should instead be used more broadly to improve prenatal health care services in the County, or in other ways that would assist all pregnant and parenting mothers and their families, rather than allocating funds specifically for elective abortions.

From nearly the time of *Roe v. Wade* (1973), there has been a consistent consensus throughout this country against taxpayer funding of abortion providers. Public opinion polls likewise consistently show that wide majorities of Americans oppose public funding of elective abortions² and support, on the other hand, people's fundamental conscience rights to not be forced to support or participate in abortion against their will. In fact, opposition to tax funding of abortion providers is greater among lower-income groups than among people with higher incomes.

In the 2017 Marist poll, among people with annual incomes of \$50,000 or more, the margin of opposition to tax-funded abortions was 16 percentage points. Among people who earned less than \$50,000, the margin of opposition was 32 points. In the YouGov poll, respondents with lower incomes were less likely than respondents with higher incomes to support federal and state funding of abortions. And in the Harvard poll, support for Medicaid funding of abortion was almost twice as high among voters who earned more than \$75,000 as among voters who earned \$25,000 or less. (W. Saletan, *Abortion Funding Isn't As Popular As Democrats Think*, *Slate*, June 12, 2019; <https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2019/06/joe-biden-hyde-amendment-democratic-support.html>)

¹ The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington is the Catholic Church in our nation's capital. As a whole, it represents more than 655,000 Catholics who live and worship in the D.C. area.

² See, e.g.: Marist, 2021, <https://www.kofc.org/en/resources/news-room/polls/kofc-americans-opinions-on-abortion012021.pdf>

Politico/Morning Consult, 2019, <https://www.politico.com/f/?id=0000016b-4360-dc80-a3ff-f37c33ee0000>

Marist, 2019, <https://www.kofc.org/un/en/resources/communications/american-attitudes-abortion-knights-of-columbus-marist-poll-slides.pdf>

Public Religion Research Institute, 2018, <https://www.prr.org/research/young-people-set-to-impact-the-debate-on-womens-health-issues>

Politico/Harvard, 2016, <https://www.politico.com/f/?id=00000158-039b-d881-adda-77db04b70000>

YouGov, 2016, <https://today.yougov.com/topics/politics/articles-reports/2016/08/12/taxation-and-morality>

Even a substantial proportion of people who identify as pro-choice are against spending the money that people pay in taxes to finance elective abortions. Some oppose public funding as a middle ground on the issue of abortion, others reason that if abortion is a personal matter, then the public should not be involved in paying for it, and it is not “pro-choice” to force others to subsidize abortion providers against their will, especially when they have fundamental objections to it.

The dissent in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* (2022) also recognized the presence of countervailing interests regarding prenatal life and that Americans hold profoundly different views about abortion (slip opinion 1, 11-12), as well as noting the great need to address the needs of pregnant and parenting mothers who choose to carry their babies to term:

Many women, however, still do not have adequate healthcare coverage before and after pregnancy; and, even when insurance coverage is available, healthcare services may be far away. Women also continue to face pregnancy discrimination that interferes with their ability to earn a living. Paid family leave remains inaccessible to many who need it most. (citations omitted) (*Id.*, 39).

With that understanding by even supporters of abortion, it is unjust and short-sighted to direct taxpayer funds to elective abortion – particularly given the substantial demand for improved health care services for pregnant and parenting women and their families. Rather than spending taxpayers’ money for the benefit of abortion providers, the County should adopt policies that truly empower women in need, promote human dignity, and improve maternal health, as the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops urged Congress earlier this year:

We exhort our nation to prioritize the wellbeing of women, children, and families with both material resources and personal accompaniment so that no woman ever feels forced to choose between her future and the life of her child. To be a truly just society that works for the common good of every human being, it is essential that we advance policies and programs that help support women with difficult pregnancies to welcome their unborn children in safety and security (Letter of April 6, 2022).

The County Council are stewards of public funds, with an obligation to spend the people’s funds on the common good, and not for the benefit of specially-favored industries or interests. We urge you to use the tax monies entrusted to you to only fund and promote policies and goals that recognize and protect the authentic dignity of women and sanctity of human life in all conditions and at all stages of development.