



FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE

ACTION ALERT

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Oppose Freedom of Choice Act

The Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA) is again before Congress (S. 1173, H.R. 1964). FOCA is a radical bill. It creates a “fundamental right” to abortion throughout the nine months of pregnancy. No governmental body at any level would be able to “deny or interfere with” this right, or to “discriminate” against the exercise of this right “in the regulation or provision of benefits, facilities, services, or information.” For the first time, abortion would become an *entitlement* the government must condone and promote.

FOCA would go well beyond the Supreme Court’s *Roe v. Wade* decision in imposing an extreme abortion regimen on our country. No other piece of legislation would have such a destructive impact on society’s ability to limit or regulate abortion. It would eliminate a broad range of laws—informed consent laws; parental involvement laws; laws promoting maternal health; abortion clinic regulations; government programs and facilities that pay for or promote childbirth and other health care without subsidizing abortion; conscience protection laws; laws prohibiting a particular abortion procedure (e.g., partial birth abortion); laws requiring that abortions only be performed by a licensed physician; and so on. For a careful legal analysis of FOCA by the USCCB’s Office of General Counsel, see: www.nchla.org/docdisplay.asp?ID=190. A summary fact sheet for general distribution can be found at: www.nchla.org/docdisplay.asp?ID=194.

In a September 19 letter to Members of Congress, Cardinal Justin Rigali, Chairman of the USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities, raised grave concerns about any possible consideration of FOCA. “Despite its deceptive title, FOCA would deprive the American people in all 50 states of the freedom they now have to enact modest restraints and regulations on the abortion industry,” and would “counteract any and all sincere efforts by government to reduce abortions in our country.” The Cardinal declared: “We can’t reduce abortions by promoting abortion.” He urged all Senators and Representatives “to pledge their opposition to FOCA.” For full text of the letter, see: www.usccb.org/prolife/FOCARigaliltr.pdf.

Recommended Actions: Contact your U.S. Representative and two U.S. Senators by FAX letter, e-mail, or phone. Call the U.S. Capitol switchboard at: 202.224.3121; or call Members’ local offices. Full contact info can be found on Members of Congress’s web sites at: www.senate.gov and www.house.gov.

Message to all Members: “Please pledge now to oppose FOCA.” Those Members of Congress who have signed on as cosponsors of FOCA should be asked to remove their names from the bill. To check the list of current cosponsors, see: nchla.org/docdisplay.asp?ID=191.

Other Actions:

1. Arrange a formal meeting with your Representative and two Senators.
2. Communicate with your Representative and two Senators at town meetings.
3. Place an ad opposing FOCA in your local Catholic paper or other publication or insert educational materials in church bulletins. For an ad presentation designed for grassroots use, see: www.usccb.org/prolife/media/docs/foca.pdf. For bulletin inserts in black and white or color, see: www.nchla.org/docdisplay.asp?ID=201.
4. Write letters to the editor or express your views on call in radio talk shows.

Thanks! 9/24/08