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August 2, 2010

Dear Senator:

The undersigned physicians who have served soldiers in the U.S. military write to encourage you to resist the partisan efforts to introduce elective abortions into military medicine. Such a drastic and controversial change in longstanding federal policy could disrupt military medicine in a time of war and also undermine military physician retention and recruitment.

We urge you to **vote NO on the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011 (DoD) (S.3280)** because it contains Sen. Roland Burris' **amendment to strike Section 1093(b) of Title 10 of the US Code.**

Current law in effect since 1996 prohibits the performance of abortion by Department of Defense (DoD) medical personnel or in DoD medical facilities (except when the life of the mother is at risk or when the pregnancy is the result of rape or incest). A separate provision prohibits the use of DoD funds for abortion except to save the life of the mother.

This policy has enabled military physicians to practice medicine according to the life-honoring principles expressed in the **Hippocratic oath and Judeo-Christian ethics.**

In 2006, the House rejected by a vote of 191-237 an amendment similar to the Burris amendment. The Burris amendment, which would allow abortion on both domestic and overseas military bases, is even *more* expansive than the rejected 2006 amendment.

Many of us remember well that when President Clinton tried to inject abortions into military facilities from 1993 to 1996, virtually *all* military physicians refused to participate in abortions. Partisan abortion ideology and lobbying have translated into a diminishing of conscience rights which, coupled with inherent pressures in pro-abortion policies such as advocated in the Burris DoD amendment, hold the potential to **drastically reduce the number of physicians, thus reducing patient access.** A scientific survey of faith-based physicians reveals that 95 percent will actually leave medicine if pressured to compromise their life-affirming ethical commitments. (*For polling details, see [www.freedom2care.org/learn](http://www.freedom2care.org/learn).*)

Reducing physicians and patient access during two wars and at a time of a growing and severe national shortage of physicians—especially in the fields of obstetrics and gynecology and family medicine—is hardly wise policy, regardless of one's views on abortion.

So we urge you to vote NO on the defense authorization bill unless Senator Roland Burris' amendment to strike Section 1093(b) of Title 10 of the US Code is removed. We also encourage you to protect patient access by taking every opportunity to strengthen conscience protections and the freedom to practice medicine according to longstanding Hippocratic and religious ethics.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

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