

WASHINGTON WATCH®

ABORTION WRONGS

"In the spring," the adage says, "a young man's fancy turns to thoughts of love." Most Americans breathe a sigh of relief after long, cold winters. But for some political leaders this year, springtime thoughts are focused not on rebirth but on an unprecedented expansion of publicly funded abortion.

Anti-Reproductive "Health"

As Congress takes up health reform this spring, a key stumbling block will be the Clinton Administration's plan to include abortion as a "medically necessary" service in its standard benefit package. Right to life and religious groups, many of whom favor some form of health care reform, have made clear that they will wage an all-out campaign to exclude abortion coverage from any reform bill.

In a move widely regarded as a preliminary test of strength on the issue, the Administration attempted last year to repeal the Hyde amendment, which permits tax-paid abortions for poor women only where the life of the mother is at stake. That effort failed; Congress expanded coverage only slightly to include instances of rape and incest. On Christmas Eve, however, the Administration surprisingly moved to mandate that all states use taxpayer dollars to pay for the expanded coverage, even if state law bars it.

Rep. Henry Hyde (R-Ill.), author of the amendment, does not believe that the mandate mirrors the intent of Congress. The Supreme Court has held abortion funding bans constitutional. During last year's debate, members of Congress received many assurances from the Administration that no mandate was intended. The mandate would require 37 states to alter their laws or even their constitutions. Thirty of the 37 fund abortion

only where the mother's life is endangered; the remaining seven require some type of police report before they will fund abortions for rape or incest.

Michigan officials, for example, say that they cannot obey the Clinton direc-

AN UNPRECEDENTED EXPANSION OF PUBLICLY FUNDED ABORTIONS.

tive because of a 1988 referendum barring the use of state Medicaid funds for abortion except to save the life of the mother. Gov. Walter D. Miller (R-S.D.) has asked the President to reconsider the policy. Gov. Robert Casey (D-Penn.) is defying it outright. Pennsylvania law includes the police reporting requirement to protect victims of assault and to deter fraud.

Stakes are high. The Administration is threatening noncompliant states with loss of their Medicaid funding if they do not pay for the additional abortions. The Planned Parenthood Federation of America, which performs nearly

one of every 10 U.S. abortions, has filed suit against 10 states seeking court-ordered abortion funding. Illustrating, perhaps, the law of intended consequences, courts that strike down "out-of-compliance" state funding restrictions may actually

leave such states funding abortion on demand.

UNborn Policy

A similar abortion funding battle is being waged on the international front. The context is a new United Nations document on population being prepared in connection with the decennial international population conference in Cairo this coming September. Published reports say that the Clinton Administration is urging foreign governments to seek "stronger language" in the document "on the importance of access to abortion services."

A cable sent earlier this year to all U.S. diplomats by the State Department instructed them to communicate to their host countries that the U.S. wanted broader abortion availability than the document now calls for. Ninety-five countries have laws against abortion. Even among the Western democracies, U.S. law is the most permissive. The current goal of U.S. foreign policy seems to be to wield abortion on demand as a primary instrument of population control.

That concern is buttressed by word that the Administration has endorsed legislation to repeal the Helms amendment, a 1973 law that prohibits U.S. funding of abortions overseas through its foreign assistance program. That effort is unlikely to succeed, but it raises the possibility that, for the first time in our history, the United States Government may truly "go global" in the abortion trade.

INSIDE

Use Our Hotline for Health	Page 2
Renewed "Interest" in Mothers at Home ..	Page 2
The Whole Truth on Pro-Family Votes ..	Page 3
The Sad Legacy of Harry Blackmun	Page 3
Taming the Divorce Monster	Page 4
Fast Forward for Abstinence	Page 4