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Conservatives say health care system 'is working'

by Kristen May by Religion News Service

WASHINGTON -- Conservative Christian groups on Wednesday (Aug. 26) ramped up opposition to health care reform, saying the current system "has problems" but "it is working."

Members of the newly formed Freedom Federation, comprised of some of the largest conservative religious groups in the country, say they oppose taxpayer-supported abortion, rationed health care for the elderly and government control of personal health decisions.

Mathew Staver, who heads the legal group Liberty Counsel and is dean at Liberty University's law school, said the group agrees on certain core values.

"We value the sanctity of life," Staver said at a press conference. "Without that, we are nothing at all."

On abortion, Federation members said they are concerned that although the word "abortion" does not appear in the draft bills, it will be paid for by the government under the proposed reform.

"When the government pays for abortion, the numbers of abortions increase," said Wendy Wright, president of Concerned Women for America.

The Freedom Federation said they would only be satisfied if the reform bills explicitly state that abortion is not a form of health care and would not be paid for with taxpayer funds.

Wright also quoted bioethicist Ezekiel Emanuel, a White House adviser and brother of Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel, as having said "It would not be discrimination to ration care for the elderly."

"The idea that my life is worth more than someone else's is inconceivable," said Bishop Harry Jackson, pastor of Hope Christian Church in suburban Maryland and chairman of the High Impact Leadership

Coalition.

Although an estimated 45 million Americans lack health insurance, federation backers said they support the current system. "There may be problems," Jackson said, "but it is working."

Wright agreed, saying, "America does offer the best health care in the world."

The Freedom Federation includes, among others, the American Family Association, the Church of God in Christ, Concerned Women for America, Family Research Council Action, Liberty University and the Traditional Values Coalition.

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