

Health Care: Vote Yes!

Michael Sean Winters | Nov. 7, 2009 NCR Today

At a late night meeting of the House Rules Committee, it was decided to allow the Stupak Amendment to come to a vote on the floor. The Stupak Amendment will conclusively bar any federal funds from going to support abortion coverage in the health care reform. It actually goes further and bars any of the private plans that participate in the planned "exchanges" from offering abortion services.

Some progressive members of the Democratic Caucus are threatening to withhold support from the final bill if the Stupak Amendment passes, which it is expected to do. But, I suspect the President will be able to rally them at the last minute and keep them on board. The Democratic Party has come so close to passing universal health insurance, closer than ever before, it is inconceivable that any but the most determined pro-choice members will bail on the bill now.

It is a fool's errand to pre-judge congressional outcomes. There still may be horse-trading going on this morning. But, there is no denying that last night's Rules Committee vote is a huge, repeat huge, victory of Catholics. Hats off to the USCCB and to Congressman Stupak for hanging tough. And, as mentioned before, this result could only come about because a key, indeed a decisive, number of members are both pro-life and pro-health care reform. The Republicans have adopted a "No-At-All-Costs" posture and have sidelined themselves from the negotiations. It will be curious to see if those Catholics who have been telling the rest of us that abortion is the only issue that really matters will now swing their support behind the health care bill. They should. If they don't they will have exposed themselves as Republicans first and Catholics second.

I had feared that I was going to have to write a post this morning entitled, "Vote No." The steadfastness of the USCCB and Cong. Stupak allows me to write a much happier post.

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