NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

Where is Senator Casey?

Michael Sean Winters | Dec. 8, 2009 NCR Today

Sen. Bob Casey is a hero to pro-life Democrats. Standing at the podium of the Democratic National Convention last summer, a podium that had been denied to his father, Casey spoke for the hopes of many progressive Catholics who are deeply committed to the Church?s social justice tradition, and see the Democratic Party?s platform as embodying that tradition, but who felt the Democrats got it wrong when they decided to exclude the unborn from their list of those whose cause deserved a champion. We knew we were not in the majority of the party, but at least we knew we had a seat at the table. Casey would be our spokesman.

So, it is more than passing strange that Casey has been so silent on the Nelson-Hatch amendment. He co-sponsored it, to be sure. But, now is the time for him to say to the Senate leadership that the current language is not acceptable and that he will withhold his support for the final bill unless it is changed. He may be able to suggest legislative language that would be more palatable to the pro-choice majority of the Democratic caucus than the language found in the Nelson-Hatch amendment. But, he should not be quiet. It is no use having a seat at the table if you are not going to speak your piece.

Now that it appears Maine Senator Olympia Snowe is looking less and less likely to vote for the overhaul reform bill, Casey and Nelson are in the catbird seat. Majority Leader Reid can?t get to 60 votes without them. And, I doubt that even such staunch pro-choice advocates as Senators Barbara Boxer and Barbara Mikulski will stand in the way of passing the final bill no matter what language is adopted on abortion. I have no doubt that President Obama is willing to throw pro-choice forces under the bus if it is needed to get 60 votes: He raised no objections when Speaker Pelosi did precisely that to get the bill through the House of Representatives.

So, speak up Senator Casey. Many pro-life Democrats are looking to you for leadership.

Source URL (retrieved on *09/02/2014 - 00:30*): http://ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/where-senator-casey