

Baptist, Brethren, Lutheran, Methodist Clergy Promote Abortion in New Letter

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Washington, DC (LifeNews.com) -- A coalition of mainline Protestant church clergy have authored a letter promoting abortion. The group sponsoring it intends it to make a statement on abortion funding as members of Congress consider health care bills that fund abortions.

The letter comes from a group of church clergy who have long advocated the pro-abortion position.

Under the umbrella of the Religious Institute, the more than 1,100 pastors and church staff from the denominations endorsed the letter.

The letter calls abortion a "morally justifiable decision" and opposed any amendments to the House and Senate bills, which current contain massive abortion funding, to strike that taxpayer-financing.

"Already, federal policy unfairly prevents low-income women and federal employees from receiving subsidized [abortions]," Rev. Debra W. Haffner, executive director of the Religious Institute complained.

The letter added that she doesn't want more abortion funding bans in place and complained that additional "restrictions" on abortion funding constitute a "serious moral injustice."

The denominations of the clergy who endorsed the letter include the American Baptist Churches, Church of the Brethren, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), United Church of Christ, and the United Methodist Church, and others.

"We affirm women as moral agents who have the capacity, right and responsibility to make the decision as to whether or not abortion is justified in their specific circumstances," the letter says.

The Jewish Reconstructionist Federation, Unitarian Universalist Association, and United Synagogue for Conservative Judaism also had clergy endorse the pro-abortion letter.

The Religious Institute claims to represent 4,800 clergy and 40 Christian denominations.

Some of the signers to the letter include: Fr. Dr. Luis Barrios, Chair of Latin American and Latina/o Studies, John Jay College of Criminal Justice - CUNY; Rabbi Dan Ehrenkrantz, President, Reconstructionist Rabbinical College; Rev. Dr. Yvette Flunder, Bishop, The Fellowship; The Rev. Dr. Paula Gravelle, Chair, Clergy Action Board; and Rev. Dr. Larry Greenfield, Executive Minister, American Baptist Churches of Metro Chicago.

They also include Rabbi Peter Knobel, Former President, Central Conference of American Rabbis; Rev. Dr. Pamela Lightsey, Dean, Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary; Rev. Michael Livingston, Executive Director, International Council of Community Churches; Rev. Dr. Deborah Mullen, Director, Center for African American Ministry and Black Church Studies, McCormick Theological Seminary; Dr. Sylvia Rhue, Interim Executive Director, National Black Justice Coalition; and Rev. Dr. William Stayton, Professor of Sexuality and Religion, Morehouse School of Medicine.

8/3/09 NOTE: An earlier edition of this story indicated the denominations of the clergy also signed the letter. We are happy to correct this and note that the denominations apparently did not participate, only the clergy members themselves.

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