

AAPLOG - AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF PRO-LIFE OBSTETRICIANS & GYNECOLOGISTS

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Dr. Michael Mennuti, MD, President, ACOG

Dept of OBGYN

U. of Pennsylvania Med Center

3400 Spruce St.

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September 23, 2005

Dear Dr. Mennuti,

The American Association of Pro-Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists (AAPLOG), the largest Special Interest Group in ACOG, was astounded to read in your August 30, 2005 letter to United States Senators that you urged Congress to alter existing law so that "Doctors who morally object to abortion should be required to refer patients to other physicians [for an abortion]."

We feel it is unfair and inappropriate that this highly controversial issue was put forward so matter-of-factly to the United States Senators as if from the unified voices of "49,000 physicians and partners in women's health." In reality, this issue has never, to our knowledge, been raised with the membership of ACOG. In fact, some of our members would not initially believe the news. They felt that you must have been quoted in error—until they saw the letter for themselves.

Those who morally object to abortion usually do so because they understand abortion as the taking of innocent human life, an act against their core moral beliefs. This conscience conviction is non-negotiable. To require a physician, who recognizes that abortion is the taking of innocent life, to refer a patient to another physician for an abortion is to force him or her to be complicit in that act. The moral principle of complicity cannot be lightly dismissed. We cannot be complicit in the elective termination of these unborn babies' lives.

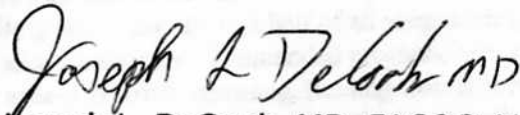
The leadership of the College has repeatedly and forcefully argued against legislation that would limit any aspect of abortion. It has been argued that such legislation would amount to government interference in the practice of medicine and that the issue of abortion should be a matter between a woman and her doctor. You now are encouraging the government to interfere in this very same

matter, by directing the actions of the doctor involved. We object to this seeming double standard.

Why is ACOG urging legislation which would override the conscience of individual physicians? Why is ACOG directly countering their published Abortion Policy of "The intervention of legislative bodies into medical decision making is inappropriate, ill advised, and dangerous."? (ACOG Compendium of Selected Publications, 2005, page 867.)

(1) We urge the ACOG leadership to thoughtfully and carefully reconsider their position on this issue, and to recognize the right of conscience of the individual physician. (2) We further urge ACOG to find out what we members believe on an issue of such gravity before presuming to speak for us. Both (1) and (2) are the most basic of ethical expectations.

Sincerely,



Joseph L. DeCook, MD, FACOG, VP AAPLOG

Written in consultation with the full Board of Directors

Copies: Senators, ACOG Officers