

NEWS from

Congressman

PETE HOEKSTRA

Michigan's Second District



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FOR MORE INFORMATION, contact:

Jon Brandt, press secretary
 (202) 225-4928 or (202) 225-4401 work
 (202) 554-2109 home

E-mail: jbrandt@hr.house.gov

Hoekstra legislation approved by Congress

Measure allows OB/GYN programs and students to ignore abortion mandate
Clinton expected to sign first major bill by congressman as part of spending bill

WASHINGTON – After nearly a year of debate and discussion, Congress approved legislation that allows medical obstetrical and gynecological programs and their students to ignore a mandate that all students be taught abortion procedures by requiring them to perform induced, elective abortions.

The language included in the Omnibus Appropriations bill was the Medical Training Nondiscrimination Act, which Congressman Pete Hoekstra, R-Holland, introduced in June 1995. **The bill was approved by the House, 399-25, and was expected to be approved by the Senate before being sent to President Clinton, who was expected to sign the bill into law. The legislation provides funding for all federal programs not yet funded for fiscal year 1996.**

The Medical Training Nondiscrimination Act, addresses the new standard imposed by the Accrediting Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) requiring OB/GYN residents and residency programs to perform induced, elective abortions as a new minimum standard beginning Jan. 1, 1996.

"This vote is a clear victory for OB/GYN residents and residency programs," Hoekstra said. "With this legislation, they will be able to continue to decide for themselves whether or not they choose to perform abortions without being coerced into doing so. This legislation gives these programs and students the right to defy the ACGME's new rules. But this is a two-way street. It is now up to the OB/GYN programs and the residents themselves to assert their rights."

As approved, the appropriations bill language states:

"The federal government and any state that receives federal financial assistance may not subject any health care entity to discrimination on the basis that the entity refuses to undergo training in the performance of induced abortions, to provide such training, to perform such abortions, or to provide referrals for such abortions."

"No medical resident in the United States should ever be forced to perform abortions, nor should any professional accrediting organization use their power to impose their political views on divisive issues," Hoekstra said. "This vote sends a signal that such coercion is not acceptable."

Hoekstra said he is pleased the appropriations bill has been approved because it meets the goals that House Republicans set last year.

"This is an historic report that we should feel very good about," Hoekstra said. "Despite all the rancor associated with the budget process for fiscal year 1996, we have accomplished our budgetary goals and we are on target to balance the federal budget within seven years."

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1122 Longworth House Office Building • Washington, D.C. 20515 • (202) 225-4401

42 W. 10th St. • Holland, MI 49423 • (616) 395-0030

900 Third St., Suite 203 • Muskegon, MI 49440 • (616) 722-8386

120 W. Harris St. • Cadillac, MI 49601 • (616) 775-0050

E-mail: tellhoek@hr.house.gov • Internet Web Page: <http://www.house.gov/hoekstra/>