

New definition of 'child' isn't a factor in abortion debate

On Jan. 31, Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy G. Thompson announced proposed regulations to allow states to provide health care insurance coverage, under the state Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), to pregnant women for their children who are not yet born. Right now, there are an estimated 10.9 million women of child-bearing age (18-44) who do not have health insurance. Automatically



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including the unborn child is the fastest way to get prenatal services to the most women rather than using a state waiver process.

According to Doug Johnson, legislative director of National Right to Life: "Classifying the unborn as persons to receive federal or state assistance is nothing new and has not affected the legality of abortion. There is already a substantial amount of state law and some federal law that recognizes unborn children as legal members of the human family for different purposes. Even the Supreme Court has never ruled that the government cannot recognize the reality of unborn children for other purposes."

I question the agenda of pro-abortion lawyers who say the law could have been extended to just say, "a pregnant woman is entitled to prenatal care." They know or should know, an unborn child is separate from her mother, as proved by the fact that an unborn can suffer from a disease or malady that in no way affects the mother. For the most part, sonograms are debunking the idea that babies in utero are not human life.

Hence, to cover just a pregnant woman would not cover the distinct human being inside the womb who may be suffering from a lack of prenatal care. Common sense tells us that children's health begins with good prenatal care. Ask any pregnant woman if her doctor is treating one or two patients.

There really is no basis for this to become a debate over abortion rights as expressed in the News-Leader's Feb. 4 editorial "Poor women aren't political pawns." There are no pawns here, only low-income pregnant women who may be forced to have abortions because they have not been medically covered.

It is well known that availability of prenatal care will improve the long-term health of both mother and child. So why is the abortion lobby upset? The reality is that the beneficiaries of these state programs will be children wanted by their mothers, and that choice deserves respect.

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