

Michigan Democrats for Life

Pro-Life for the Whole Life

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Did Democrats really try to sneak abortion funding into the COVID-19 economic stimulus package?

You may have seen reports that Democrats in the House of Representatives tried to exploit the coronavirus pandemic by sneaking funding for abortion into their proposed economic stimulus package. Those reports appear to have originated from the White House in an interview with *The Daily Caller*.¹ They were passed on by several Republican politicians and commentators as well as several pro-life news sources,² and they were widely quoted in mainstream media.

What you may not have known is that **those reports were not true**.

The actual facts are that:

- The funding provided by the bill in question was for COVID-19 laboratory testing.
- The bill did not need to include the Hyde Amendment because the bill did not involve funding for any services that could potentially include abortion.
- The inclusion or exclusion of the Hyde Amendment for any particular bill affects only that bill. *It very clearly does not affect past or future legislation.*
- The bill in question was ultimately amended to clarify that funding was being provided only for COVID-19 purposes. (That had been the case from the start, but it is good to clarify that sort of thing.)

Does it matter that the White House and Republican news sources spread a false allegation? It actually matters a great deal, even though the allegation in question was broadly consistent with the reality that Democrats who support access to abortion do, in fact, support access to abortion.

The issue is whether it is appropriate to seek political advantage by circulating false narratives to produce emotional revulsion against one's political opponents.

¹ The *Daily Caller* article can be accessed at <https://archive.is/wqYb7>

² Two examples are: *Life News* <https://archive.fo/N1IUj> , and *Pulpit and Pen* <https://pulpitandpen.org/2020/03/13/the-democrat-solution-to-coronavirus-more-abortion-funding/>

Partisan rhetoric is increasingly designed to generate visceral reactions rather than appealing to logic, ideas, or truth. Such an approach is effective for winning elections, but it is very destructive to our society. In this case, the false narrative was intended to produce a visceral reaction against Democrats by making it seem as if they are ‘so intent on killing babies’ that they surreptitiously exploited the pandemic to promote abortion.

Unfortunately, such strategies are not limited to the current occupant of the White House. Supporters of both parties have often used lies, half-truths, and inflammatory language to demonize their opponents. (A corresponding narrative on the pro-choice side alleges a ‘pro-life war against women.’) These narratives have just enough substance to keep them alive, but they are very destructive for the nation and for the prospect of meaningful dialogue. It is hard for anyone to win over minds and hearts--or even have a constructive conversation--when the minds and hearts on both sides of an issue have been poisoned by visceral disgust and misunderstanding of people with different positions.

The reality is that most people who are pro-choice are motivated by concern for women who face difficult circumstances, and most people who are pro-life are motivated by concern about children in the womb. To varying degrees, many who are pro-choice also care about children in the womb and many who are pro-life also care about women facing difficult circumstances. There is a basis here for the sort of meaningful dialog that is a foundation for our society. False and inflammatory allegations weaken that foundation.

Especially as we approach another election season, it is important for all of us to question any allegations we encounter that seem calculated to provoke contempt, revulsion, or anger with people who disagree with us. Such allegations are not always objective or truthful.

The following links will be helpful to those who want to look into this issue further:

A concise refutation of the false claims:

<https://www.politifact.com/factchecks/2020/mar/16/blog-posting/no-pelosi-wasnt-caught-trying-add-abortion-funding/>

A more detailed refutation of the false claims:

<https://www.patheos.com/blogs/lovejoyfeminism/2020/03/no-there-was-not-abortion-funding-in-the-coronavirus-bill.html>

Text of the original bill:

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/6201/text/ih>