

Written by Lissa Poblete
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POSITION PAPER ON THE RH BILL by Christian Pro-life Resources for the Philippines

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By the Christian Pro-life Resources for the Philippines

These are the reasons why we say NO to the RH bill:

1. The RH bill carries with it an oppressive punishment for people who will not comply with it, making disagreeing with it and teaching something contrary to it a crime. Section 21 of the RH bill says that "the ... ff. acts are prohibited: any healthcare service provider, whether public or private, who shall knowingly withhold information or impede the dissemination thereof, and/or intentionally provide incorrect information regarding programs and services on reproductive health including the right to informed choice and access to a full range of legal, medically-safe and effective family planning methods" BUT- who defines what is correct or incorrect here? The RH bill and its proponents. If the RH bill proponents says that an IUD is not abortifacient, and abortion is not wrong, and that life does not begin at conception, all of which are totally wrong and against Christian principles, so when Christian health workers will teach about the sanctity of life and that life begins at conception, and that sex should only be between married couples, we will be violating the RH bill and committing crimes once it becomes law.

2. The RH Bill undermines the institution of marriage. As Christians do not have any doctrine prohibiting ligation, you may think it may not be of concern to many Christians, but the RH bill considers a prohibited act (Sec 21) if a health worker "refuses to perform voluntary ligation and vasectomy and other legal and medically-safe reproductive health care services on any person of legal age on the ground of lack of spousal consent or authorization". The Catholic and Muslim nurses and doctors who refuse to perform ligation or vasectomy, will be committing a crime. We do not malign or disdain Catholics on this matter. It is against their doctrine. BUT, for us, the RH bill terribly undermines marriage: the Bill puts into law that a woman or man does NOT have to have spousal consent or authorization to have a ligation or vasectomy. And if a health worker refuses to perform this procedure, on this particular ground of lack of spousal consent, he or she will be committing a crime. Christian, Catholic and Muslim marriages will be affected by this.

3. The RH bill undermines parental authority and undermines the family, which are against Christian principles. The RH Bill will punish those health workers (Sec. 21) who "refuse to provide reproductive health care services to an abused minor, whose abused condition is certified by the proper official or personnel of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) or to a duly DSWD-certified abused pregnant minor on whose case no parental consent is necessary". What does it mean by "reproductive health care services to an abused pregnant minor"? Pregnant young women all the more need parental guidance and consent is necessary for whatever "reproductive health services" will be done on these young abused women! Why doesn't the bill specify what "reproductive health services" will be done on such minors, who are already pregnant? Is this bill trying to hide the use of abortion or the use of abortifacient chemical contraceptives like the "emergency contraceptive" as "solutions" offered to an abused minor who is already pregnant? And all without a parent's consent, which is totally unacceptable to Christian doctrine.

4. The RH bill has a conscientious objection provision, BUT, it negates it by REQUIRING by law

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"that the conscientious objector shall immediately refer the person seeking such care and services to another health care service provider within the same facility or one which is conveniently accessible". (Sec. 21) So even if a Catholic or Muslim doctor refuses to perform a ligation, they are required to refer. People who conscientiously object must NOT be required to refer. They are already objecting.

5. The RH Bill will require Christian churches and schools to provide reproductive health care services to its employees. All abortifacient forms of birth control, those that prohibit the conceived embryo from implanting in the uterine wall, are unacceptable to Christian teachings. The RH Bill will require employers to provide "reproductive health care services, supplies and devices to all workers, more particularly women workers." The RH bill will punish employers for not following section 17, which states: "all Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs) shall provide for the free delivery by the employer of reasonable quantity of reproductive health care services, supplies and devices to all workers, more particularly women workers. In establishments or enterprises where there are no CBAs or where the employees are unorganized, the employer shall have the same obligation." So employers are required to provide reproductive health care to its employees! Remember, this will become a law. This will affect Christian, Catholic and Muslim employers, even Christian churches and schools, because our churches and schools have employees. Remember, intrauterine devices and some birth control pills are abortifacient, meaning they prevent implantation of an already-conceived embryo. Life begins at conception, therefore, anything that kills an embryo or prevents it from implanting causes an abortion or death of the human embryo. As Christians, we know that life begins at conception. We reject any form of any birth control that kills a conceived life.

6. Contrary to claims by RH bill proponents in Congress that abortion is not mentioned, the bill specifically mentions abortion in Sec. 4 in its definition of terms: It lists as the fourth element of reproductive health care the "prevention of abortion and management of post-abortion complications". You may say, but it prevents abortion, what's wrong? But why must "management of post-abortion complications" be part of reproductive health? Abortion is a crime. Why must the RH bill specifically mention management of post-abortion complications? It specifies "abortion" as the cause of the complication. What this does is that it sets apart induced, illegal, morally wrong, criminal abortion as a procedure or cause necessitating management. Why not just make it a more general "provision of emergency obstetric care to everyone who needs it"? The very fact that abortion is specified as the cause of the

complication means that the RH bill condones abortion and gives it special treatment. Abortion is murder of the unborn baby and a grievous sin before God. It is the shedding of innocent blood. It is a crime under Philippine laws.

7. The RH bill will teach the entire nation, especially the young people, its definitions of human sexuality, sex, sexual identity, interpersonal relationships, affection, intimacy and gender roles. They will also define contraception and abortion. In Section 4, the RH bill defines "Reproductive health education" as "the process of acquiring complete, accurate and relevant information on all matters relating to the reproductive system, its functions and processes and human sexuality; and forming attitudes and beliefs about sex, sexual identity, interpersonal relationships, affection, intimacy and gender roles. It also includes developing the necessary skills to be able to distinguish between facts and myths on sex and sexuality; and critically evaluate. and discuss the moral, religious, social and cultural dimensions of related sensitive issues such as contraception and abortion." Once again, who decides what is correct and What are facts? The Bill and its proponents determine that. And once it is a law, whatever they (the proponents and the Population Commission) define these things to be, will be what is correct and anyone who teaches otherwise will be committing crimes. And once again, abortion is mentioned. Abortion has nothing to do with "responsible parenthood" and "family planning".

8. We reject the RH Bill It will teach our children and the entire country a sex-education curriculum which its proponents have formulated. The RH Bill says in Sec. 12, "Mandatory Age-Appropriate Reproductive Health Education."– "Reproductive Health Education in an age-appropriate manner shall be taught by adequately trained teachers starting from Grade 5 up to Fourth Year High School ... The POPCOM, in coordination with the Department of Education, shall formulate the Reproductive Health Education curriculum, which shall be common to both public and private schools and shall include related population and development concepts in addition to the following subjects and standards: Reproductive health and sexual rights; Reproductive health care and services; Attitudes, beliefs and values on sexual development, sexual behavior and sexual health; Proscription of the hazards of abortion and management of post-abortion complications; Responsible parenthood. Use and application of natural and modern family planning methods to promote reproductive health, achieve desired family size and prevent unwanted, unplanned and mistimed pregnancies; Abstinence before marriage; Prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS and other, STIs/STDs, prostate cancer, breast cancer, cervical cancer and other gynecological disorders; Responsible sexuality; and Maternal,

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peri-natal and post-natal education, care and services.” While prevention of AIDS and STDs, abstinence before marriage and responsible parenthood are good, there is nothing good with the government teaching “Attitudes, beliefs and values on sexual development, sexual behavior and sexual health” to our children! Plus, once again they have managed to insert “abortion” again. What will be taught about the “hazards of abortion”? Abortion is 100% fatal and 100% hazardous to the unborn baby who has been aborted! Why must “management of post-abortion complications” be taught in sex education?

9. We reject the RH bill because it's really about money for contraceptive manufacturers and suppliers. The RH bill puts into law that contraceptives will be made into essential medicines . Sec. 10 says “Hormonal contraceptives, intrauterine devices, injectables and other allied reproductive health products and supplies shall be considered under the category of essential medicines and supplies which shall form part of the National Drug Formulary and the same shall be included in the regular purchase of essential medicines and supplies of all national and local hospitals and other government health units.” The RH bill only lays the groundwork for government purchases of contraceptives, including some contraceptives that are abortifacient, which we reject.

10. We reject the RH bill because it encourages a two-child policy. In Sec. 16, “Ideal Family Size” it says: “The State shall assist couples, parents and individuals to achieve their desired family size within the context of responsible parenthood for sustainable development and encourage them to have two children as the ideal family size. Attaining the ideal family size is neither mandatory nor compulsory. No punitive action shall be imposed on parents having more than two children.” While it says that it is not mandatory or compulsory, it will still become a law, meaning, the law will encourage this two-child policy. If it is written in the law, it will be part of legislated health policy. Previous versions of the RH Bill (the past HB 3773) even had a provision that government scholarships will only be extended to the first two children in a family. Surprisingly, it is no longer in the present bill. But what if this is put into the implementing rules and regulations? And people who will have large families will be stigmatized even if they are not punished.

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Whatever is good in the bill is already legal and is being done. Yes, women who aborted/killed their children must not be refused emergency obstetric care. But RA 8344, already penalizes the refusal of hospitals and medical clinics to administer appropriate initial medical treatment and support in emergency and serious cases. Women who have aborted/killed their babies are already given emergency obstetric care through this act. HIV-AIDS programs are already in place through RA 8504, the "Philippine AIDS Prevention and Control Act of 1998". The RH bill tries to encompass so many health issues under it such that people who reject the RH bill are viewed as anti-women, anti-health, anti-HIV prevention and anti-development.

But now we have shown you what is definitely worth rejecting in the RH bill-it is the hidden agenda tucked into the RH bill, the oppressive nature of the bill toward those who reject it, the values it undermines and the questionable "values" it will try to teach.

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