

## Church Official Hails House Vote Against Coercive Abortion Programs

WASHINGTON (July 15, 2003) -- "The House of Representatives has affirmed the dignity of women and their unborn children in developing nations," said Gail Quinn, executive director of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities. Ms. Quinn was reacting to the House's 216-to-211 vote today to retain U.S. policy against funding organizations involved in coercive population programs.

The July 15 vote was on the Smith/Oberstar/Hyde amendment to the State Department reauthorization bill, H.R. 1950. By approving this amendment, the House removed language from the bill that could have released \$50 million to the U.N. Population Fund (UNFPA) despite that organization's support for a Chinese population program that uses coerced abortion and involuntary sterilization.

"Coerced abortion has been condemned throughout the international community as a crime against humanity, and as an act of violence against women," said Ms. Quinn. "It is disappointing that almost half the members of the House were tempted to treat this human rights violation as something that can be ignored or finessed when pursuing business-as-usual with population control groups. In the end, however, the House took the right action, and we hope the Senate will do so as well."

Cardinal Bevilacqua, chairman of the USCCB's Committee for Pro-Life Activities, had written to the House in strong support of the Smith/Oberstar/Hyde amendment. See [www.usccb.org/comm/archives/2003/03-143.htm](http://www.usccb.org/comm/archives/2003/03-143.htm).

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Office of Communications  
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops  
3211 4th Street, N.E., Washington, DC 20017-1194 (202) 541-3000  
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