

VETO—S. 323

MESSAGE

FROM

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

RETURNING

WITHOUT MY APPROVAL S. 323, THE FAMILY PLANNING
AMENDMENTS ACT OF 1992



SEPTEMBER 26, 1992.—Ordered to be printed

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

WASHINGTON : 1992

To the Senate of the United States:

I am returning herewith without my approval S. 323, the "Family Planning Amendments Act of 1992." This legislation would extend and amend the Federal family planning program under title X of the Public Health Service Act.

If the scope of S. 323 were limited to family planning, I would approve it. My Administration has an excellent record in support of family planning. About this there can be no question. Our approach to reauthorizing title X was embodied in a bill transmitted to the Congress on February 25, 1991. We need a family planning program to deliver preventive, pre-pregnancy services.

Unfortunately, S. 323 is unacceptable because it would override current regulations that are designed to maintain the title X program's integrity as a pre-pregnancy family planning program. The bill would require projects supported by title X family planning funds to counsel pregnant women on, and refer them for, abortions. Such a requirement is totally alien to the purpose of the title X program. Title X is a quality health care program that provides pre-pregnancy family planning information and services and refers pregnant women to health care providers who can ensure continuity of care.

Under current regulations, upheld by the United States Supreme Court, pregnant women who seek services from clinics funded by title X would be referred to qualified providers for prenatal care and other social services, including counseling. Moreover, nothing in these regulations prevents a woman from receiving complete medical information about her condition from a physician. The Supreme Court specifically found that the regulations regarding the title X program in no way violated free speech rights.

In a memorandum to Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Louis Sullivan on November 5, 1991, I reiterated my commitment to preserving the confidentiality of the doctor/patient relationship. In that memorandum, I also repeated my commitment to ensuring that the operation of the title X family planning program is compatible with free speech and the highest standards of medical care. My memorandum makes clear that there is no "gag rule" to interfere with the doctor/patient relationship. There can be no doubt that my Administration is committed to the protection of free speech.

I have repeatedly informed the Congress that I would disapprove any legislation that would transform this program into a vehicle for the promotion of abortion. Unfortunately, the Congress has seen fit to entangle this family planning program in the politics of abortion.

I believe that the title X family planning program should be reauthorized. I now urge the Congress to adopt a bill that promotes true family planning rather than requiring Federal tax dollars to

be used in a manner that promotes abortion as a method of birth control.

GEORGE BUSH.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *September 25, 1992.*

○