

# Bartlett Changes His Amendment: A New Action Imperative

By W. H. MARSHNER

Sen. Dewey Bartlett (R., Okla.), on March 11th, 1975, introduced an anti-abortion amendment to the Family Planning and Population Research Act of 1975 (a part of S. 66 — see *The Wanderer*, March 20th, p. 4). As a result of criticism from colleagues, however, Bartlett decided to abandon that amendment in favor of a new, more specific one.

The older amendment has not been withdrawn but will not be called up for a vote. The new amendment was introduced on March 26th, with the cosponsorship of Sen. Jesse Helms (R., N.C.).

The text of the new Bartlett Amendment is as follows:

**"At the end of the bill add a new section as follows:**

**"No funds authorized under subchapter IV or subchapter XIX of the Social Security Act may be used by the States to pay for or encourage the performance of abortions, except such abortions as are necessary to save the life of a mother."**

The force of this new amendment will be to close the two main channels through which Federal funds are used to pay the medical bills for the actual abortion operations. These channels are Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC equals Title IV of the Social Security Act) and Medicaid (equals Title XIX) however, the new amendment will have no effect on the Family Planning and Population Research Act itself (equals Section II B of S. 66 which equals reauthorization of funding for Title X of the Public Health Service Act), which is the main channel for abortifacient research and for "program grants" to local and regional family-planning organizations (mostly affiliates of Planned Parenthood, Inc., which offer abortion services as part of a total population control or family-planning package. In other words, the new Bartlett Amendment has no impact on any of the contents of S. 66, the bill to which it will be attached, but relates exclusively to the Social Security Act.

By contrast the old Bartlett Amendment would have affected both S. 66 and the Social Security programs. As introduced on March 11th, that measure read as follows:

**"Amend section 1008 to read as follows:**

**"No funds authorized under this act or any other act may be used in any manner directly or indirectly, to pay for or encourage the performance of abortion except in a case where such abortion is necessary to save the life of the mother."**

The section 1008 referred to above in part of Title X of the Public Health Service Act (and hence is repeated in S. 66). This

is the so-called Dingell Amendment, originally attached to the Tydings Act in 1970, which forbids Title X funds to be used "where abortion is used as a method of family planning." As anti-abortion language, it has been notoriously ineffectual. Thus, the old Bartlett Amendment would have replaced the Dingell language entirely, whereas the new Bartlett Amendment leaves Section 1008 untouched.

According to Bartlett's legislative assistant, David Russell, the senator abandoned his old amendment because colleagues complained that its wording as "too general." Another reason for the switch, however, was the intervention of the United States Catholic Conference (USCC).

The Conference had announced that it would not support the old Bartlett Amendment precisely because it threatened to dislodge the Dingell language, which was originally drafted and endorsed by the USCC. Ever since that measure's adoption in 1970, the Conference has feared that an attempt to strengthen it might backfire and lead to the repeal of all anti-abortion language. The main reason for the USCC's concern in this regard is the hostility of Rep. Paul Rogers (D., Fla.), powerful chairman of the Public Health and Environment Subcommittee of the House Commerce Committee. Rogers

fought the Dingell Amendment bitterly in 1970, but after the important string of pro-life victories in the 93rd Congress, it is not clear that the USCC's concerns are still well-founded.

But whether or not the fears of the USCC are still justified, the new Bartlett Amendment avoids the "pitfalls" which earlier blocked Conference support. At this writing, however, it remains to be seen whether the USCC will in fact change its stand and endorse the new Bartlett language. Many right-to-life observers fervently hope that this endorsement will be forthcoming, since the Zero Population Hotline has been predicting for weeks that the Bartlett Amendment vote will be *the* crucial abortion vote of the 94th Congress. We add our voices to those of other right-to-life observers in calling upon the United States Catholic Conference to publicly endorse the new Bartlett Amendment and vigorously urge its passage.

Meanwhile, the Bartlett change leaves a gap which must be filled by other amendments which would directly affect the family-planning authorizations in S. 66. Such an amendment is presently being advocated in both Houses by the Human Life Amendment group. It would cut off all Federal money for abortion-related research. The text of this amendment and an editorial analysis will appear in next week's *Wanderer*.