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HEALTH

COMMUNICATIONS,
TELECOMMUNICATIONS, AND
THE INTERNET

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1319

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Dear Colleague,

This is an exciting time as conservatives have once again been given the trust of Americans to lead in the House of Representatives. The people have spoken and asked for less government, a real economic recovery plan to get the middle-class back to work and an agenda that will promote strong family values. As we chart our path forward in the 112th Congress, I will help ensure a vigilant and aggressive pro-life agenda is part of that course.

Speaker-elect Boehner summed it up well in a recent speech to the National Right to Life, "As we look ahead to the future, we need to know who the defenders of life really are. No one gets a pass when it comes to life." I couldn't agree more.

As a Christian by faith, I have remained an unequivocal pro-life supporter throughout my entire career. I am proud to have consistently high ratings from groups such as the National Right to Life, Americans United for Life and the Christian Coalition. As I seek the Chairmanship of the Energy and Commerce Committee, I believe it is critical that leadership begins from the top of the committee when it comes to protecting the unborn. Truly pro-life values cannot be delegated down.

In our ever changing society the assaults on life have grown beyond the traditional borders we have come to know. This past year as the Ranking Member of the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health, I was able to prevent an anti-life agenda on more than one occasion.

Most recently, hidden in a few seemingly unrelated public health bills this fall were provisions that would have proved harmful to the rights of the unborn. The "Calling for 2-1-1 Act" would have allowed federal dollars to flow to states that provide over the phone referrals for abortion services. Similarly, legislation to reauthorize telehealth programs was ready to quietly move despite disturbing reports of RU-486 being distributed remotely without a woman ever being physically examined or counseled. Through my oversight and a close working relationship with the pro-life community, we were able to stop those bills from ever being considered.

As we embark on this new Congress, now is not the time for those of us who have jurisdiction over pro-life issues to turn a blind eye. Attacks on the unborn must be met head on. It is our task to ensure any legislation passed protects the right to life. At the same time, we cannot allow any federal dollars to flow to entities for abortion related services.

It is equally important newly emerging issues gain needed attention and awareness. Fetal pain has surfaced as one of the latest areas of contention. We have brought the battle to states that are beginning to limit the practice of abortions after 20 weeks. Now is the time to take the lead here in Washington.

As Congress moves to fix the many flaws of Obamacare, we must ensure commitments to prohibit federal funds for abortion services are backed with more than 11th hour deals and hollow promises. Legislation, not executive orders, is the only acceptable and enforceable check on taxpayer dollars.

There is a great deal of work ahead, but I look forward to the challenges. As Chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee I would stand committed to leading our pro-life agenda and not let it fall to the wayside. I look forward to working with all of you in protecting the sanctity of life.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Shimkus". The signature is stylized with a large initial "J" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

JOHN SHIMKUS
Member of Congress