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Twelve Anti-Family Gifts from Congress

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As Congress wraps up its final business for the year, there are at least a dozen detrimental policies included in the omnibus spending bill recently signed into law by the President. Taken as a whole, these policies devalue human life, weaken civil society, and undermine the family. Unfortunately, these provisions have largely gone unnoticed by the general public.

The Dirty Dozen. The Fiscal Year 2010 Omnibus Appropriations bill passed by Congress includes a slew of offensive items:

1. *Elimination of abstinence education.* Despite polling showing the vast majority of parents want their children to be taught that abstinence is best,¹ the omnibus defunds the abstinence-based education program. In its place Congress creates another condom-based sex education program.
2. *Spreading the wealth.* The omnibus bill, as well as the other appropriation measures that have passed this year, represent a fulfillment of President Obama's promise to "spread the wealth." His 2010 budget reflects a 30 percent increase over President Bush's last year in office on means-tested welfare programs such as housing, food stamps, and health care. Unfortunately, these programs do little or nothing to help recipients move off of the welfare rolls and into jobs where they can achieve independence and provide for their families.
3. *Needle exchange.* Tucked into the health portion of the bill is an allowance of federal taxpayer funds to be used for needle exchange programs whereby drug addicts can get new needles for turning in used needles. Ostensibly to prevent

the spread of infection, these programs settle for "harm reduction" rather than overcoming drug addiction. The provision does allow local health agencies and local law enforcement to "opt-out."

4. *Planned Parenthood funding.* Despite the country's towering deficit, the omnibus bill boosts Title X family planning funding by \$10 million to \$315.5 million. The largest recipient of Title X funds is Planned Parenthood.
5. *United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).* Despite its stated mission to "ensure that every pregnancy is wanted," the UNFPA would receive \$5 million more from U.S. taxpayers to, among other things, support China's mandatory one-child policy, under which millions of wanted pregnancies have been ended.
6. *International family planning.* Shortly after his inauguration, President Obama rescinded the "Mexico City policy," which banned funding to organizations that promote and/or perform abortion overseas. The omnibus bills would give these groups an additional \$103 million.
7. *Limiting free speech.* The omnibus bill drops a ban on federal funds being used to enforce or implement the "Fairness Doctrine." This policy would have the effect of shutting down conservative talk radio programs.

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The section of the bill that funds the District of Columbia includes these disturbing provisions:

8. **Ending the D.C. Scholarship Program.** For five years, thousands of D.C. families have been able to send their children to safe and effective private schools. But the omnibus bill allows no new entrants into the program—despite a 2009 Department of Education report showing a statistically significant increase in reading scores for scholarship students.²
9. **Public funding of abortion.** The bill lifts a ban on D.C. using local funds to promote and fund abortions for District residents.
10. **Taxpayer-financed domestic partner benefits.** The bill lifts a longstanding ban on the use of federal taxpayer funds to pay for health care benefits for domestic partners of D.C. employees. Federal funds would also now be used for domestic partnership registration.
11. **Legalized medical marijuana.** The bill gives D.C. the ability to use local funds to start and implement a medical marijuana program. This

comes at a time when, according to a recent article in *The Wall Street Journal*, Los Angeles is attempting to reel in its program. Medical marijuana dispensaries have become one of the fastest-growing industries in the city, with some 1,000 dispensaries cropping up since 2004.³

12. **Needle exchange for drug abusers.** A decade-long ban is lifted in the bill to allow D.C. to use local funds to run a needle exchange program for drug addicts. Unfortunately, a provision keeping these programs from within 1,000 feet of any school, day care, or youth center was stripped out in the final bill.

Unwelcome Christmas Gifts. The Christmas season is a time when Americans celebrate life, family, and community. Unfortunately, the 12 unwelcome Christmas gifts in the omnibus bill, signed into law by President Obama last week, undermine these pillars of American civil society.

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1. See Robert E. Rector, Melissa G. Pardue, and Shannon Martin, “What Do Parents Want Taught in Sex Education Programs?,” Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No.1722, January 28, 2004, at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Abstinence/bg1722.cfm>.
2. See Dan Lips, “D.C. Opportunity Scholarships Boost Reading Scores, Family Satisfaction,” Heritage Foundation *WebMemo* No.2396, April 10, 2009, at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Education/wm2391.cfm>.
3. Tamara Audi, “L.A. Agrees to Limit Medical Marijuana Dispensaries,” *The Wall Street Journal*, December 9, 2009, at <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB126033084958883141.html> (December 19, 2009).