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Santa Barbara

Christianity and the Politics of Poverty in the United States

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Political Science

by

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Christianity and the Politics of Poverty in the United States

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by

Skylar Joseph Covich

Dedicated to my wife,
Theresa Russ Covich

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project was inspired by a multitude of life experiences. I have deep friendships with those whom I would describe in this project as being on the Christian Left, the Christian Center and the Christian Right, and I have deep respect for all their points of view. The hard part, of course, is turning all that experience and the initial set of questions into academically distinct research questions, developing an analytical process for answering them, and organizing chapter outlines. My advisor, Steve Weatherford, patiently dealt with this task. He helped me narrow down the policy areas to be discussed, often read over outlines of chapters before I drafted them, and always encouraged me to think in terms of political science to answer the research questions, rather than my constant inclination to add in many historical facts out of context. His caution regarding the “rather anodyne” statements issued by religious groups proved correct, as I soon found it better to look at media accounts and congressional hearing transcripts.

My other committee members, Eric Smith and Kathleen Moore, provided generous assistance throughout the research process. Smith’s seminars on Congress and public opinion were great opportunities to learn about some of the key topics in this research project, and his insights about the writing process were very valuable. Moore, a religious studies professor, provided valuable insights early in the research process regarding the relationship between politics and religion in the United States. I am also grateful to the extremely supportive community of faculty and graduate students, past and present, in the Department of Political Science at UC Santa Barbara. Special thanks goes to Shyam Sriram, a passionate advocate of interfaith cooperation, with whom I am co-authoring an article based on part of this research.

I have seen first-hand the necessity of governmental programs as a blind student in need of many special services. My parents navigated the sometimes difficult process of getting these services for me, which illustrates the complex uneven policies for the disadvantaged I am exploring professionally. I have been fortunate to have studied with two political scientists who are also blind, Hisham Ahmed and Amit Ahuja. Ahmed, with whom I took classes as an undergraduate, guided me on my graduate school application process; Ahuja provided much helpful insight on the research process.

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Last but not least, my family provided the love and support I needed, both before and during this writing process. My father, Frank Covich, has always been there to support me in so many homework sessions, with moving in and out of student apartments, and with building a professional reputation. My mother, Linda Mitchell, first cultivated my interest in religion, history and politics, which she also shares. Finally my wife, Theresa Covich, is kindly formatting this dissertation. More importantly, though, she and her family have taught me new perspectives on theology, church history, and the philosophy of labor which have changed some of the emphases of this project. Our intellectual discussions are ontologically good, not to mention thought-provoking and edifying.

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ABSTRACT

Christianity and the Politics of Poverty in the United States

Skylar Joseph Covich

Christian organizations in the United States take positions in favor of or against progressive efforts to address poverty primarily based on theological considerations. In order to support governmental programs and regulations such as welfare, comprehensive health care and higher minimum wages, they must believe that structural changes, rather than an increase in religious faith, will likely solve intergenerational poverty. However, religious organizations effectively lobby in favor of such efforts primarily in their capacity as providers of charity and health care services to the poor. Because opinion within most denominations on poverty is divided, there are competing theological interpretations which weaken the standing of denominational leaderships and lobbyists to speak for their traditions when they use religious rhetoric. Some conservative evangelical organizations have slowly come to accept governmental programs because of the long-term interests of their charitable agencies. I argue that the Catholic Church lobbies more effectively than mainline Protestant denominations in favor of governmental programs because of its larger charitable agencies. This is despite the fact that the Catholic Bishops occasionally oppose governmental programs, such as Democratic comprehensive health care reform proposals, because of the possibility that they may fund abortions. Though opposition to abortion is a theological priority for the Catholic Church, the bishops remain close to the Democrats on economic issues despite increasing political polarization. I argue that minimum wage policy has provided an opportunity for Catholic, mainline Protestant, black Protestant and progressive evangelical congregations to come together on a relatively simple and popular policy issue

where change can and must occur at the local and state level. My primary methods are examinations of media accounts and congressional committee hearing transcripts.

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Dramatis Personae

The following is a list of major organizations discussed in this project.

Southern Baptist Convention

Founded in 1844 in a split over slavery, it is the largest Protestant denomination with over 16 million adherents; many, though not all, of its churches are in the South. Three of the last six Democratic Presidents (Harry Truman, Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton) have been SBC members. Despite a general inclination to be suspicious of state power, it was once willing to support welfare programs. As a leading advocate of the separation of church and state, it was among the last groups to support some faith-based partnerships with government. But just as the tide was turning on that issue, a group of theological conservatives took over the Southern Baptist Convention in the 1980s, and its leaders, such as Richard Land, director of the denomination's Ethics and Religious Liberty Coalition (ERLC), began to support cuts in welfare and oppose health care reform. It generally argues, as in its 1987 resolution on hunger and poverty, that it is the responsibility of churches to address issues of hunger, and that this includes bringing the poor to religious faith. Since Russell Moore, who belongs to the SBC's African-American minority, took over the ERLC in 2014, the SBC has moved to the left on immigration and softened its general tone.

National Association of Evangelicals

Founded in 1943 as a coalition of northern evangelicals who sought to combine conservative theology with more political engagement than had been displayed by the fundamentalist Protestant faction in recent decades, the NAE is a coalition of denominations of which the largest is the Pentecostal group Assemblies of God. Its denominations come from a variety of different traditions of Protestantism, which makes presenting a coherent

vision a challenge. It had hoped to attract the Southern Baptist Convention and Lutheran Church Missouri Synod as members, but failed, and thus has been required to compete with these denominations in the broader conservative Christian movement. The National Association of Evangelicals has long been concerned about the national debt; for example, it released a resolution on fiscal responsibility in 1984. By 2004, its resolution “For the Health of the Nation” acknowledged the government’s duty to provide social programs, and in 2011 it joined the interfaith group Circle of Protection to support the increase in the debt ceiling to protect food stamps. It remains socially conservative on issues of abortion, gay marriage, and the rights of religious institutions, but it has become progressive on most other issues including the environment and immigration.

US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)

The Catholic Church’s social teachings argue that the protection of human life is the most important duty of government and that the beginning of each human life is at conception. These teachings are codified in documents released by the Vatican such as the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, paragraph 8. The Vatican also calls on governments to strive for a just economy. It strongly implies advocacy for minimum wage laws, as the denial of just wages is described as one of the four sins that cry to Heaven for justice. The Catholic Church in each country is allowed to advocate for legislation that leads to the Catholic Church’s goals of protecting human life, promoting the traditional family and creating a just economy. In the United States, the Catholic Church has supported most welfare programs for the last century. It also supports the concept of universal health care, but does not always support specific proposals because of conflicts over whether abortion and contraception should be considered health care.

The **National Catholic Welfare Council** was founded in 1919 by Father John Ryan as an official channel for consultations between Catholic bishops and charity leaders, and for official statements by the Bishops. It was nearly suppressed by the Vatican in 1922. After the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s, it was split into the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and the US Catholic Conference, which merged in 2001 to form the USCCB. Its public policy priority is abortion, but from the outset it has also supported social programs for the poor.

The US Conference of Catholic Bishops' committee on **Domestic Justice and Human Development** is in charge of lobbying on behalf of welfare policy, tax credits, social security, and other anti-poverty and economic concerns. While the Bishop chairing the committee changes every three years, the committee's Office of Social Development was directed from the 1990s until 2015 by John Carr, a layman.

Some other Catholic Groups include:

The National Conference of Catholic Charities was founded in 1910. Now called **Catholic Charities USA**, it undertakes its own lobbying efforts, usually in close association with the Catholic Bishops on welfare policy.

The **Catholic Health Association** administers and lobbies on behalf of Catholic hospitals and other affiliated health care services. All indications point to Catholic dominance of religiously affiliated health care. 1 out of 6 hospital beds in the United States belong to Catholic hospitals (*The Washington Post* 12/2/2013). Thus, the Catholic Health Association is the primary religious lobbyist which can claim to be a significant player in health care administration.

National Council of Churches

The National Council of Churches was founded in 1908 as the Federal Council of Churches. It includes what are known as mainline Protestant denominations, most black Protestant denominations, Eastern Orthodox denominations, and a variety of small, mostly liberal churches independent of all these traditions. **Mainline Protestants** are sects encompassing the more liberal wings of all of the major traditions of Protestantism. With the exception of the Episcopal Church, they formed out of church splits with more conservative evangelical and fundamentalist branches between the early and mid-twentieth century, along with mergers of theologically similar denominations or, in the Presbyterian and Methodist cases, mergers of geographically distinct denominations. The mainline Protestant denominations are the United Methodist Church (by far the largest), the Episcopal Church USA, the Presbyterian Church USA, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the United Church of Christ (Congregationalist), and the Disciples of Christ. Most of these denominations have more conservative groups which have remained within, including some who identify as evangelical. The UMC has, in fact, gained observer status in the NAE. But the leadership of the NCC, its mainline Protestant denominations, and its black Protestant denominations have maintained progressive positions on almost all issues, including justice for the poor. The National Council of Churches and many of its mainline Protestant denominations have offices in Washington DC. The NCC also undertakes research on congregational responses to poverty and encourages denominational and ecumenical poverty initiatives.

Lutheran Services

Lutheranism is the mainline denomination with the most long-standing and extensive social services, particularly in regions of the country with substantial Lutheran populations.

Lutheran Social Services, however, is run jointly by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (an NCC denomination) and the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (a politically and theologically conservative denomination), which largely limits its participation in politics at least at the federal level. However, Lutheran charity directors have testified before Congress in efforts to protect social welfare programs.

Other Progressives

A variety of interfaith groups have assisted the National Council of Churches and USCCB in their work for the poor, sometimes leading particular lobbying or community outreach efforts.

Founded in 1972, **Bread for the World** is a non-denominational organization with the goal of ending hunger in America by changing public policy. Its members are congregations rather than denominations. Lutheran minister David Beckman, its director since 1991, has been at the forefront of many religious anti-poverty lobbying efforts. The National Council of Churches has often been at the forefront of a complex network of interfaith coalitions, beginning with the Washington Inter-Religious Staff Council in 1968, many of which included the Catholic Bishops and progressive Catholic organizations. Since the collapse of Interfaith Impact, one of the most long-term poverty-focused coalitions in 1995, David Beckman of Bread for the World and Jim Wallis of the progressive evangelical group Sojourners and the Call to Renewal Movement, and the National Council of Churches, have long sought to form another permanent interfaith coalition to protect welfare programs. **Circle of Protection**, founded in 2010, has been their most successful long-term effort; it gained the full backing of not only the usually sympathetic US Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic Charities, but also the National Association of Evangelicals

and the Salvation Army, which had rarely lobbied in favor of welfare. There are also more narrowly topical interfaith groups. For example, Interfaith Worker Justice is a long-term organizing effort which helped to form Let Justice Roll, for the 2007 campaign to increase the minimum wage. In the area of health care, the Inter-Religious Campaign for Health Care Access, founded in the 1970s, later became Faithful Reform in Health Care and the Faith for Health Coalition.

Chapter 1: Introduction

When I give food to the poor they call me a saint. When I ask why they are poor they call me a communist.

—Bishop Helder Camara

Why do many Christian denominational organizations in the United States argue in favor of progressive efforts against poverty, while a few conservative Christian organizations argue against such efforts? Under what circumstances do organizations on either side of this debate become influential on policy outcomes? A theological orientation toward social justice and secular interest as charitable agencies combine to motivate denominations to engage in lobbying for the poor. These factors have gone a long way toward making the Catholic Church the foremost religious advocate for the poor, despite its antagonistic relationship with the Democratic Party over the politics of abortion. However, with the possible exception of black Protestant denominations, most Christian organizations must argue against those within their groups who do not want denominational lobbying on behalf of the poor. Conservative Catholic and evangelical critics of a progressive approach to poverty usually argue that the only way to truly address the root causes of poverty is to promote the spreading of their religious faith. Combined with more secular fears about government inefficiency, such conservative viewpoints can form counter-narratives within denominations which significantly limit the effectiveness of their lobbying on progressive efforts to address poverty, even when the leaders of these denominations entirely support progressive economic efforts.

Although my primary academic interest is the influence of religion on American politics, I also seek to place this project within the literature on interest group politics. It is

worth beginning, then, by noting an important sense in which religious groups act similarly to other interest groups; by acting within the economic interests of their organizations. In the upcoming chapters I show how, on the issues of poverty including social welfare and health care, religious groups act in what they perceive to be the interests of charitable agencies associated with them. It is not surprising that religious groups have come to political beliefs for secular reasons. Mark Smith's new book *Secular Faith* examines how religious groups have changed their beliefs over time on a variety of issues such as money lending and divorce because of changes in culture.

Yet religious organizations also clearly take into account the doctrinal precepts of their denominations, and, perhaps more importantly, moral guidance derived from theological interpretations which are acceptable, but not required, by their denomination. Christian leaders, from the social gospel movement of the early twentieth century to the present day, very often describe their own experiences with the poor as having a great influence on them. But the lessons they take from their work with the poor are quite different. Some, such as progressive evangelical leader Jim Wallis, the author of *God's Politics*, who was greatly influenced by the Catholic Worker movement's leader Dorothy Day, come to the conclusion that the Christian command to serve the poor can only be fulfilled by using the power of government to mitigate the economic structures which cause poverty. Others, like conservative evangelical Marvin Olasky, author of *The Tragedy of American Compassion*, come to the conclusion that many government programs don't work, and that religious charities need to develop the necessary resources to replace government programs, because religious anti-poverty initiatives can run more efficiently and teach the poor the necessary character traits for success. Many Christian advocates take somewhat of

a middle ground, questioning the suitability of some government programs while supporting others which they see as offering support to those most in need or incentivizing hard work (Walsh 2000).

Certain denominations or coalitions of denominations develop clear attitudes to politics and theology which are rarely challenged. However, scholars of American religion learn quite early in their studies that most religious groups do not have internal consensus among their membership on most issues. Putnam and Campbell (2010) have shown that the attention devoted to the “3 B’s”—belief, belonging and behavior—define what it means to be a member of one’s religious denomination and illustrate the divisions within all religious groups. Those who claim to belong to a religious group may often fail to attend religious services, or differ in beliefs about issues large and small. It should not be surprising, then, since no denomination requires support of specific economic policies, that there is not internal agreement on how to deal with poverty within most denominations. Even as they call for commitment to the poor as a biblical mandate, religious denominations which have taken a firm position on poverty and social justice are unwilling to sanction those who disagree with it. Even the most liberal denominations have factions which oppose the National Council of Church’s position supporting governmental programs, as shown by the Pew (2015) Religious Landscape Survey result that nearly half of mainline Protestants believe government aid to the poor does more harm than good. The more hierarchical Catholic Church has a membership more supportive of government aid to the poor; roughly 55% in the 2015 Pew Religious Landscape Survey. The 40% opposition figure, which is consistent as compared to earlier polling results (Putnam and Campbell 2010), however, is enough to undermine denominational unity on the topic, especially given the strength of

economically conservative Catholic organizations in politics, as will be described in Chapter 2. Black Protestant denominations, by contrast, have a much stronger consensus on government aid to the poor as a good.

Evangelical support for government aid to the poor is much weaker than it once was, as will be described in Chapter 2. But the 35% support for government aid to the poor indicated by the 2015 Pew Survey, and the presence of progressive and centrist evangelical think tanks and organizations such as Sojourners, Evangelicals for Social Action, and the Center for Public Justice, provide outlets for more progressive ways of thinking about poverty in conservative denominations. Thus, while individual evangelical denominations have not lobbied on behalf of the poor, umbrella organizations of evangelical denominations have shown openness to cooperation with government despite this being controversial in evangelical public opinion. Even if they begin by preferring such cooperation to be on their own terms such as faith-based partnerships, as described by Schafer (2012), the staunchly conservative National Association of Evangelicals later became a full partner in the interfaith group Circle of Protection in 2011.

A difficult question, then, is whether religious leaders primarily take a theological view that is influenced by their politics, or take a political view influenced by their theology. Future research might inquire into the formation of young seminarians who later become Christian leaders. But hypothesizing that theological and political beliefs generally fit together, we can generally divide Christian advocates into two approaches. One believes that government, while imperfect, has a place in solving economic problems through welfare and health care programs and other regulations. Religious institutions should play a supplementary but not comprehensive role. Both governmental and religious programs do

not necessarily need to focus on instilling faith and personal salvation upon the poor. The other approach, while advocating for a strong state on moral and patriotic issues, is skeptical of government's ability to regulate most economic life. This approach also sees personal salvation as an integral part of ending the cycle of poverty in families, and thus religious institutions should take primary responsibility for care of the poor, particularly in a secular age when government cannot be expected to uphold such values.

The Religious Typology: Christian Left, Center and Right

In this project I form a typology of religious organizations, extending from the Christian Left, to my personally defined category of Christian Center, to the Christian Right. In this introduction I provide a section about each of them, focusing on the most significant challenge they must contend with in their efforts to address poverty. The Christian Left, consisting of most of the mainline and black denominations of the National Council of Churches and a few progressive Catholic and evangelical organizations, supports all progressive efforts to address poverty. It also supports the rest of the platform of the Democratic Party, including at least neutrality, if not active support, of abortion rights and same-sex marriage. The Christian Center, including the US Conference of Catholic Bishops and more recently the National Association of Evangelicals, supports progressive efforts to address poverty and many other progressive causes such as environmental protection, immigration reform and the anti-war movement, but is socially conservative on issues of abortion and marriage. Both the Left and Center experience great division over whether to support compromise legislative proposals which are not as progressive as the proposals originally under consideration; for example, during debates over the Family Assistance Program in 1970 and the Health Security Act of 1994. The Christian Right, including the

Southern Baptist Convention, opposes many progressive efforts to address poverty and in general adheres to most of the platform of the Republican Party.

The Christian Left

As Walsh (2000) and many other sources demonstrate, and as I will detail in Chapter 2, Christian progressives in the early twentieth century began to argue that the state had the ability to provide a more systematic solution to poverty than local communities and religious charities could manage. There is no doubt that their commitments to supporting social welfare programs come from theological training they have received in principles of social justice (Tipton 2007; Snarr 2011). For some on the Christian Left, their commitment to justice leads them to advocate for goals that are politically unrealistic, or to take on too many issues at a time. Hofrening (1995) argues that religious groups tend toward calls for legislation based on moral principles, in what he calls “prophetic lobbying.” In prophetic lobbying, organizations call on politicians to fix poverty by any means necessary because it should be a moral priority.

Internally, those who are primarily motivated by social justice and those who are pragmatically trying to seek any forward movement often disagree about whether to support legislation. For example, as will be described in Chapter 3, during the first year of the Clinton administration, the leadership of the National Council of Churches and black Protestant denominations, including advocates from religious charities, supported Democratic health care plans, seeing any possible reform as a benefit to enough people that it was clearly worthwhile. Meanwhile various mainline lobbyists and progressive evangelical social justice advocates held out for the possibility of a single payer health care

system. This undermined the unity of the progressive Christian message, and caused personal conflicts which lasted for years to come (Tipton 2007).

By upholding a more radical vision of social justice, Christian progressives have the potential to build an anti-poverty movement distinct from other progressives. Yet with a few exceptions, their attempts at mobilizing systematic reforms through social protest and education have gained little long-term political traction. Statements released by the National Council of Churches have been more accessible through their online presence, but they have been described even by their sympathizers as rhetorically vague (Gill 2012).

There are some advantages to maintaining a focus on more specific, incremental reforms, which religious organizations have a greater tendency to do when lobbying in their capacity as charitable institutions. Politicians understand that religious groups have genuine expertise in their work with the poor, and they are better able to reach those who do not have their particular theological commitments. But they risk losing their distinct influence, as they become merely another in a long list of partners in liberal coalitions.

Christian progressives also lobby on behalf of the poor in their capacity as leaders of religious charities. Most mainline and black Protestant denominations, along with their umbrella organization, the National Council of Churches, have their own national charitable organizations, and their local congregations are involved in community development work. Given their theological commitment to social justice, they are likely to argue that, whether or not government assists their particular charities, that government programs benefit those charities by lessening the extent to which they are overburdened with the need to help those who may be helped more comprehensively by social programs. Hofrening acknowledges that charities have a significant impact on religious social justice work. They do so first by

informing politicians about their particular work, with discussion of the types of government programs that would or would not be helpful, and second by joining allied organizations in presenting statistics about poverty with which to contextualize their theological beliefs about poverty and the needs of their charitable agencies. The Christian Left's connections with the Democratic Party provide opportunities for them to easily work with think tanks generally allied to the Democrats and which present relevant statistics on poverty, such as the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities and the Urban Institute. But as will be described below, it is not only the Christian Left as defined in my typology which argues for governmental action based on the interests of charitable institutions.

Aside from the tension between prophetic lobbying for social justice and the more pragmatic lobbying of agencies, there are other challenges that are even more exclusive to the Left. The problems of maintaining a specific religious identity are compounded when adding the Christian Left's generally non-traditional views from within their religious denominations. In their support for socially liberal causes such as abortion rights, along with their tacit, sometimes even overt support for Democratic politicians, they become vulnerable to wholesale attacks from their opponents inside their denominations. Conservative opponents of the Christian Left accuse Christian progressives of seeing their theological views of social justice as more important than maintaining the doctrine of their denominations. Religious progressives have been accused of supporting governmental programs only because they are unwilling to devote the necessary resources to charity. By advocating changes in the doctrines of their denominations, they are also accused of causing the decline in church attendance by watering down doctrines so that people no longer believe they have to attend church to be moral (Putnam and Campbell 2010; Swarts 2012).

The Christian Center, although upholding some of the more traditional doctrines of their denominations, are still left open to these attacks.

The Christian Center

While there appears to be a coherent narrative by which many Christians leaning toward social conservatism argue against progressive efforts to address poverty, the Catholic Church has long asserted that conservative views on family values and the definition of human life should be combined with progressive views on the economy. Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, the archbishop of Chicago in the 1980s and 1990s, advocated a “seamless garment” approach, which connected protecting life beginning at conception with protecting the quality of life of all through social programs (Reese 1992). Other slogans used by people advocating this approach include “consistent life ethic,” “life from conception to natural death,” and “womb to tomb.” (Massaro 2007). Yet those with this combination of beliefs have found themselves politically homeless in recent decades, and even without a consistent label, unlike their general opposites, the libertarians. The Pew Research Center’s survey on political typologies, last updated in 2014, uses the term “Faith and Family Left”, but this group does not comprise the whole of the Christian Center. Determining support for the Christian Center in public opinion is difficult. While one can start by looking at the numbers of evangelicals, Catholics, and even mainline Protestants who support welfare policies, most studies do not provide a way to determine which Christians in favor of welfare are socially conservative (thus in the Christian Center) and which ones are not (and thus in the Christian Left). A few studies provide some clues that there remains a constituency for this sort of politics. Wuthnow (2004) noted that 36% of religious conservatives support increased spending on welfare, while Abramowitz (2010) notes that 20% of Democrats as of the

writing of his book are pro-life. It may be assumed that few pro-life Democratic voters would remain Democrats if they did not support social welfare spending. Finally, when analyzing the 2015 Pew religious landscape survey, at least 30% of Christians in all religious traditions who oppose legalized abortion also support government aid to the poor.

The Christian Center is also aided by the fact that some of its charitable organizations are particularly well-organized and respected for their expertise on poverty. Catholic Charities and the Catholic Health Association, in particular, are arguably the most influential Christian public policy groups in their fields, as I discuss in my chapters on health care and welfare. They uphold Catholic teaching on abortion, which sometimes puts the Catholic Health Association particularly in a politically difficult bind. But their work with the poor motivates them to take Catholic social teaching on poverty seriously. Furthermore, they have a history of seeking government help to deal with poverty since the nineteenth century, having been over-burdened by the large numbers of Catholic immigrants whom they were called to serve. Evangelical charities are much newer to Christian Center politics, but they, too, have demonstrated expertise working with the poor, and their work with the poor has taught some of them to be realistic about the need for government assistance.

The Christian Center, however, has been beset by political woes. Two journalistic accounts in the past decade have lamented the Democratic Party's treatment of Christian voters with conservative social values, focusing on Catholics (Sullivan 2008; Winters 2008). On the other side, economic conservatives often associate Christian Center activists with the Democratic Party and left-wing politics. There has not been a definitive account in political science or related disciplines of Christian Center politics, though such views are prominent

in studies of Catholics (Reese 1992; Hayer et al 2008) and non-rightist evangelicals (Gassaway 2003; Swartz 2012).

Some Christian Center activists have responded by seeking an alliance with the Republican Party despite their disagreements. Hayer et al (2008) describes how Catholic Bishops have preached sermons and presented voter guides tacitly encouraging Catholics to vote for the Republican Party by reminding them to focus on abortion as a great intrinsic evil of our time, arguably turning the Catholic vote toward the Republican Party after the 1980 elections. Gassaway describes how Ron Sider, the leader of Evangelicals for Social Action and a co-founder of Evangelicals for McGovern three decades earlier, voted for George W. Bush in 2000 with the hope that his socially conservative politics and support for faith-based partnerships would create the right blend of respect for traditional values and social justice. Yet as he and the Catholic Bishops have often been reminded, there are only occasional successes in efforts to move the Republican Party on poverty issues, while their anti-abortion politics has antagonized Democratic allies on poverty. To compound the situation, some adherents of Christian Center politics have remained in the Democratic Party as “Democrats for Life,” softened their pro-life principles to varying extents, or declared that they would stop voting; thus, Christian center politics is a chaotic set of actors with no common strategy.

The Christian Right

How could evangelicals vote in such large numbers for Jimmy Carter, an evangelical Christian Democrat who supported a relatively large welfare state, and then turn around to back the Reagan Administration and Republican Presidents thereafter? Why would conservative Catholics and mainline Protestants go against the economic policies of their

denominational leaderships? Some observers of the Christian Right present a narrative in which the Christian Right cares little about economic issues, voting against their own best interests for the sake of the Republican Party's promises on abortion and a few other cultural issues. On the other hand, there is a scholarly consensus that evangelicals, at least, did not consider abortion to be a primary issue until the 1970s, after the *Roe v Wade* decision (Wilcox and Robinson 2011).

The best way to understand the Christian Right's real preferences and priorities is to consider their views on both abortion and economics as a symptom, rather than a cause, of their political identity. Right-wing evangelicals, and their allies in other traditions, see both legalized abortion and progressive economic programs as fruitless attempts by an inefficient, irreligious government to solve problems such as poverty and lack of family formation that can only be solved by a revival of religious faith. Scholars who study the farthest corners of the Christian Right, such as Christian reconstructionism and dominionism (Walsh 2000) (McVickar 2015) may tend to overstate the extent to which the Christian Right desires a more theocratic government. But there is no doubt that the mainstream Christian Right desires a government which cultivates a Christian culture.

Further, many evangelicals who have worked with the poor try to argue that their brand of Christian faith does a better job than government programs at solving poverty, especially Marvin Olasky, who coined the term "compassionate conservatism." Harding (2000), in her anthropological study "The Book of Jerry Falwell", notes the approach of "sacrificial economics" adopted by Falwell and other religious right leaders of the 1980s and 1990s, which encouraged evangelicals to show their commitment to Christian revival by giving as much as possible to Christian ministries. With the understanding that Christian

ministries would help the poor achieve religious faith, Christians could do more to solve poverty than could the government.

As will be discussed in Chapter 2, the seeds for evangelical distrust of government were planted at least by the early decades of the twentieth century. Some scholars theorize that evangelicals opposed progressive movements because they did not want to be on the same sides as their theological opponents (Marsden 1995). This would indicate that the type of politics that leads pro-life advocates to distrust progressive programs specifically because Democrats support them, goes back much earlier than the abortion debate. Other scholars, such as Cruce (2015) note the long-standing alliance between religious leaders and business interests, as business leaders sought to amplify seeds of distrust between religious leaders and government. Finally, there is no doubt that many Christians genuinely believe that government programs are inefficient. Even those often perceived to be on the progressive side, like the Catholic Worker Movement's leader Dorothy Day, were surprisingly unimpressed by government programs even in the middle of the twentieth century. Although she certainly did not work to oppose such programs, Day urged religious groups to focus on their own individual efforts to take care of the poor. (Dorrien 2011).

By uniting Christian cultural goals with the language of fiscal conservatism, the terms for an alliance to build a new conservative movement became clear by the 1970s. Nash (1976)'s analysis of the conservative movement as an alliance of libertarians, social conservatives and foreign policy conservatives set the stage for contemporary scholarship on the Republican Party and conservative movement, but Legee et al. (2002) most effectively synthesize the cultural narratives which mobilized the Christian Right and allowed them to unite with the other branches of conservatism; that threats to the capitalist economic system

and family values from social changes starting in the 1960s are threatening to both American politics and Christian life. In such readings of the political situation, capitalism is threatened from within by the expanding welfare state at home and from communism abroad. The anti-war movement weakens American patriotism and thus strengthens communism. The women's liberation movement, and social programs which provide support to single mothers undermine the conservative vision of the family, while social programs directed at racial minorities provided a talking point for conservatives to reach those who had previously supported segregation, while couching it in a message of self-reliance and hard work (e.g. Gilens 1999). As numerous other studies corroborate, most Protestant denominations had only lukewarm opposition to abortion until the late 1970s. The early evangelical Right was more interested in the issue of prayer in public schools. They took up the abortion issue as a clear example of the decline of Christian values in the United States, for which there was already an opposing movement set up by Catholics.

McGerr (1996) and Dochuk (2012) discuss the core of activists from a variety of denominations who began organizations at the community and national level in order to propagate this particular approach to conservative ideology, while others such as Martin (1996) and Wilcox and Robinson (2011) discuss their continued mobilization into a variety of national organizations which bridged denominational gaps. Parallel organizations were also used to change politics within denominations. Their special target was the Southern Baptist Convention (Hankins 2002), which moved in a much more conservative direction in the 1980s as factions in the denomination accused the old leadership of being too accommodating to liberal ideas. Schlozman (2015) describes how the Religious Right

served as an anchoring movement for the Republican Party, providing it with activists while seeking to influence its conservative direction.

As scholars of conservative politics universally note, tension between the Christian Right and the rest of the conservative movement has increased substantially in the past decade. However, as Montgomery (2012) and other essays in the 2012 edited volume *Steeped* (concerning the rise of the Tea Party) make clear, this tension is not because the Christian Right opposes the fiscal conservatism of the Tea Party. There is a great deal of overlap between the memberships of the Tea Party and the Christian Right, and Christian Right leaders are primarily concerned that some Tea Party leaders would like to distance the movement and the Republican Party from social issues.

Recent studies indicate that conservative churches continue to perpetuate conservative economic views. Beam (2015), citing more recent studies and conducting research of her own, argues that conservative churches adopt right-wing politics with the assistance of opinion leaders who pass on information about fiscally conservative interpretations of theology to other congregants who are already willing to hear them. Beam's extensive interviews with American evangelicals, and the work of previous scholars such as Hart (1996) and Putnam and Campbell (2010), mostly consisting of surveys and interviews, show that ministers in conservative churches generally pay little attention to economics in their sermons, but conservative views on economics are reinforced by social conversations among congregants. Thus, their attachment to the Republican Party and its policies becomes greater, and their support for welfare cuts and market-based health care solutions, far from being a price that must be paid for supporting a pro-life party, instead become a further reason to support conservative candidates.

As will be discussed below (in Chapter 2), as recently as the 1980s, evangelical voters were much more likely to support some progressive economic policies. But recent books on voting behavior such as Abramowitz (2010) affirm that church attendance among white Christians correlates with Republican voting. Fiorina and Abrahms (2009), along with the 2007 and 2015 Pew religious landscape surveys, also indicate that church attendance, rather than denominational identity, correlates with conservative views on economic and domestic policy issues. This includes not only evangelicals, but also white Catholics, who are more likely to support progressive economic policies than white evangelicals but less likely than Hispanic Catholics, or white Catholics who do not regularly attend church. The correlation also includes mainline Protestants, who belong to denominations which do not belong to the Christian Right but which continue to have some doctrinally conservative congregations.

As Fiorina and Abrams (2009) note, economics is a key factor in the voting decisions of the right. If Christian Republicans are voting based on their conservative economic views rather than their conservative social views, the narrative that the Christian Right is in an uncomfortable alliance with economic conservatives must be questioned. Rather, Christian values can be grafted onto an already existing secular conservative narrative. Such appears to be the case for the Southern Baptist convention, which as Orrin Smith's 1997 book *The Rise of Baptist Republicanism* argues, shifted toward the Republican Party and toward conservative politics on poverty in parallel with the rest of the South, which at the same time resulted in the strengthening of theologically conservative organizations within the denomination. What we can take from our understanding of this narrative is that even though the Christian Right appears to participate in less direct lobbying or social protest

against most poverty policies compared to the Left and Center activism in favor of such policies, the Christian Right remains a powerful opponent in economic debates.

At its best, the Christian Right has the potential to motivate Christians to help the poor in their own communities. It can also highlight specific instances of governmental inefficiency. However, the Christian Right fails to take into account that getting rid of government programs would fail to restore the Christian culture they hope to achieve. They fail to develop a realistic plan for avoiding social upheaval from the absence of government programs they would hope to cut.

Scholarly Contribution of the Project

Several streams of literature within social science disciplines such as political science, history, sociology and religious studies have examined the impact of religious groups on poverty policy in the United States, either by discussing poverty in the context of other work by a specific religious group (e.g. McGreevey 2003 for Catholics; Gassaway 2003 for progressive evangelicals; Tipton 2007 for Methodists and other mainline Protestants) or by examining religious work on poverty in the context of a broader discussion of poverty policy (e.g. Katz 1996; Chappel 2010). There is much academic literature about the work of faith-based organizations in welfare policy, with a particular revival in that field during the decade after the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996 (e.g. Cnaan 1999; Bane et al 1999; Dobelstein 1999; Bartkowski and Regis 2003; Wuthnow 2004). This work underscores the importance of considering the needs of charitable agencies as paramount in religious attitudes to poverty policy. Quite reasonably, these books focus on best practices for congregational work with the poor in the context of new resources available to them from government partnerships. In addition to

presenting up-to-date developments on the themes of these books, my project systematically analyzes the involvement of denominational organizations in formulating the poverty policies that created and continues to influence the politics around faith-based partnerships.¹

Walsh (2000)'s book *Religion, Economics and Policy Priorities* is perhaps the closest to my project. It examines the theological attitudes of specific leaders and organizations on government spending and the plight of the poor as a whole, in addition to case study chapters on health care reform and welfare reform (though with no mention of the minimum wage). In addition to being outdated, it does not systematically examine the interaction between views of social justice, life and family issues, government efficiency, and the interests of religious charities.

The literature on interest groups, within which this project should be placed, acknowledges that the poor are underrepresented in lobbying by religious groups (e.g. Schlozman, Brady and Verba 2011). These works often acknowledge that religious groups have done significant work to represent the poor, but have not discussed such work in detail. When interest group literature does focus entirely on religion, it has tended to produce work which looks at religious activism on a broad set of issues (e.g. Hertzke 1988, Hofrening 1995, Smith 2013). The general theoretical literature on interest groups does provide a useful framework to describe the ways in which religious organizations might act as interest groups; as lobbyists for ideas based on moral principles, as lobbyists for the policy preferences of their members, and as organizations which can provide politicians with useful information. These three categories can be used to look at the variety of academic literature

¹ For example, chapter 2 describes how the Catholic Church first agreed to partnerships with the government in the late 1800s and soon after came to support governmental welfare programs as long as a place remained for church charities. Chapter 4 describes how some evangelical organizations have undergone a similar evolution.

which deals in whole or in part with religious approaches to poverty, and to build the argument for the ways in which all of these considerations are important.

My choices for policy case studies are federal spending on social welfare (in particular, the Temporary Aid to Needy Families and SNAP food stamp programs), comprehensive health care reform, and minimum wage laws. The Catholic Bishops and other Catholic agencies, along with mainline Protestant denominations, have focused significant effort lobbying in all of these policy areas. I will argue throughout this project that the Catholic Church, because of the clout of Catholic Charities and the Catholic Health Association as agencies with expertise, has been most influential. These three case studies allow analysis of different types of anti-poverty programs. Welfare is a series of income support programs for which progressive lobbyists have had to fight against cuts for the past 30 years. Health care reform is a massive effort to address one major social program that particularly impacts the poor, which did achieve some policy success during the last Democratic administration. The minimum wage, which has drawn the most grassroots attention from religious progressives and the least opposition from the Religious Right, is an economic regulation which benefits workers.

Methods

The methodology of this project is to build on the information already available in academic sources by examining congressional hearing transcripts and media accounts. Although I have and will continue to study the web sites developed and maintained officially by each denomination, I have generally found their statements to be lacking in detail about follow-up actions. Congressional committee transcripts usually provide a better summary of the thinking of denominational leaderships and charitable agencies concerning

the topic at hand. Media accounts often highlight important quotes from interviews of organizational leaders, provide evidence of lobbying activity or social mobilization, and give some indication of the level of attention being received by denominations on their efforts. I focus on examinations of three national newspapers; *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *The Los Angeles Times*, and two religious periodicals, *The Christian Century* and *The National Catholic Reporter*.

One difficult decision I had to make was the extent to which federal-level and state-level lobbying would be examined. I made the decision to primarily examine federal lobbying for welfare and health care reform, and state level lobbying for the minimum wage. This does not mean that religious groups have no influence on state governments regarding welfare and health care. As Yamane (2005), the most extensive academic study of state Catholic conferences explains, Catholic lobbying at the state level intensified after dioceses in over 20 states formed Catholic conferences shortly after Vatican II, and especially after responsibility for many federal programs devolved to the states starting in the 1970s. *The Washington Post* noted particular Catholic influence on welfare policy in Maryland (Muscatine 1982). Yamane, in a survey of state Catholic Conference directors, found that the broad category of “economic justice” was the third highest priority among Catholic lobbyists of the state level, but far behind the two highest priorities of anti-abortion advocacy and lobbying on behalf of Catholic education. While Wuthnow and Evans (2002) largely discount mainline lobbying at the state level, Hertzky’s edited volume *Representing God at the State House* finds significant mainline involvement alongside Catholic bishops in lobbying for social programs. Minnesota has a particularly substantive history of religious lobbying on welfare policy, by the interfaith Joint Religious Legislative Coalition (Knudson

2015). However, on the issues of welfare and health care, state governments primarily respond to federal regulations. For example, after the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act, which cut federal welfare programs, religious groups had to lobby states in order to prevent them from cutting their own programs, while also lobbying federal regulators and members of Congress in order to save state programs. Regarding the minimum wage, on the other hand, the most important religious influence has been at the state and local level, with a sustained social movement since the early 1990s to get “living wages” through city councils, state legislatures and ballot measures, as the federal minimum wage increases became few and far between.

Outline

Chapter 2 examines the development of Catholic, mainline and evangelical denominational approaches to poverty before the Clinton administration, first by discussing scriptural views of poverty and the complexities of denominational politics since the Protestant Reformation, and then by discussing the ways in which religious leaders responded theologically to crises of immigration, industrialization, economic depression and continued poverty despite postwar prosperity. The chapter then discusses religious responses to the backlash against the welfare state which intensified during the Reagan administration, and the efforts of the Religious Right and associated think tanks to undercut progressive religious efforts. It makes a case for focusing on the involvement of religious charities in leading the religious response to poverty from the 1930s to the 1980s, by comparing the findings of Schafer (2012) with congressional committee hearing transcripts.

Chapter 3 compares religious responses to the failed Health Security Act of 1994 and the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010; this debate caused a crisis in

Catholic politics which nearly prevented the law's passage, but the Catholic Health Association assisted the Obama administration despite opposition from the Bishops because of its interests as a health agency and commitment to the more progressive segment of Catholic social teaching.

Chapter 4 compares the responses of religious denominations and charities to the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996 and the debt ceiling crisis of 2011. In the mid-1990s, religious groups tried to adapt to the increasing threats to welfare programs and the heightened involvement of the Religious Right in anti-welfare politics in a variety of ways. The Catholic Church attempted to link increased welfare with lower abortion rates to an extent that it has not done before or since. Religious charities worked to persuade lawmakers that they could not make up the difference from government cuts, with Catholic Charities working largely independently and the mainline charities in a more extensive coalition with secular agencies. By 2011, religious lobbyists from a variety of denominations were reviving attempts previously made to develop an ecumenical lobbying strategy based on social justice. This chapter notes that religious groups have, in recent decades, attempted to respond to conservative talking points that they perceive to be most open to a more progressive interpretation; the politics of abortion in the 1990s and the politics of fiscal responsibility in the 2010s.

Chapter 5 examines the politics of the minimum wage, with a focus on state and local social movements since 1995, which have benefited from religious involvement. In this case as well, there has been resistance to progressive legislation in the federal government. Religious groups have responded by advocating for as many states and local governments to increase wages, using both appeals to social justice and the needs of

religious charities. The chapters mostly follow the same outline; however, allowing for differences in the political paths along which these issues developed, there are some organizational differences in the chapters. Most sections in each chapter begin by showing how progressive religious groups sought to mobilize support through advocacy of social justice, usually by forming interfaith and secular coalitions. I then examine how the left and center was usually required to focus on tactics of advocacy through charitable agencies, persuading politicians to consider their expertise in the needs of the poor. I then examine the ways in which conservatives and progressives alike dealt with issues that became tangled with programs for the poor, especially the politics of abortion and views about family formation. Finally, where applicable I examine the extent to which religious conservatives argued that programs would be inefficient. Thus, their main objection to welfare and health care reform followed a narrative by which they were not conducive to the interests of churches because they did not instill religious faith. Health care, with its direct application to issues of life at its beginning and end, has been more concerning to the religious right; the minimum wage, as it is not a government program and arguably allows the poor to cultivate values of hard work, is less concerning to them.

Throughout, I develop three main arguments: First, religious groups are most effective when they lobby in their capacity as charitable institutions; however, they have to have some sort of belief in social justice in order for charities to pursue goals of social justice. Second, the Catholic Church does, as is often claimed, prioritize the issue of abortion, but this approach been a hindrance to progressive politics only on the issue of health care. It causes political problems for Catholic lobbying, but the political difficulties and steep decline in mainline denominations cause almost equal difficulties. Third, the

Christian Right takes an entirely different approach to poverty, with cultivation of faith as the long-term goal. However, there are signs that this approach is changing in some evangelical organizations, so much so that I include the National Association of Evangelicals in the category of the Christian Center. The continued support of some evangelicals and the Catholic Church will be vital for any continuation of progressive efforts to address poverty, particularly given the conservative victory in the 2016 elections, as I discuss in my concluding chapter.

Chapter 2: Historical Background

This chapter traces the history of American denominational efforts to work with governmental institutions. It begins by explaining the biblical reasons for so many religious progressives and moderates to advocate comprehensive justice for the poor, and some critiques from more conservative religious communities also using scriptures. The next section argues that no denominational tradition has ever had a monopoly on progressive or conservative views of these matters. For example, Calvinism's impulse to drive the poor toward hard work to demonstrate their faith was later transformed into a reinterpretation of Calvinist ideas in the social gospel movement of the early twentieth century, in which Christians were called to create a better world for the poor despite all obstacles. The trials of the immigrant experience in the United States brought Catholic charities into partnership with the state, which was a break from the historical European Catholic experience.² This chapter further traces Christian involvement in poverty policy from the Great Depression to the Reagan Administration. Overall, mainline Protestants and Catholics sought to expand the welfare state and health care programs because of their belief in social justice and their growing understanding that religious charities could not provide comprehensive services. Conservative evangelicals, meanwhile, remained largely outside this alliance because of their focus on the need for the poor to achieve personal religious faith.

The Bible and Poverty

The Bible takes a particularly explicit and consistent interest in the issue of fair wages. All of the following verses demand that employers pay fair wages primarily because

² Catholics had been hesitant to bring the state in to care for the poor even in countries where they were dominant, not because they failed to care for the poor, but because they saw the work of their religious orders as more efficient; given the political realities of such countries, they were likely correct.

they are earned through hard work, and it is unjust for people to remain poor because they are not given what they have earned. While none of these verses directly call for minimum wages to be mandated by law, they strengthen arguments that fair wages are an important part of a just society.

In the Old Testament, Moses commands the Israelites, “You shall not withhold the wages of poor and needy laborers, whether other Israelites or aliens who reside in your land in one of your towns” (Deuteronomy 24:14). The book of the Prophet Jeremiah admonishes “Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness, and his upper rooms by injustice; who makes his neighbors work for nothing, and does not give him his wages” (Jeremiah 22:13). In the New Testament, Jesus implies consistently that good workers should be compensated justly, especially in Luke 10:7: “remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages.” This verse is used both by the *Compendium on the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church* (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2004) and by Bob Edgar of the National Council of Churches in his *Middle Church* (2006). Finally, the Epistle of James 5:4 states that “the Lord hears the cries of those who are not given just wages.”

Religious advocates for the poor may also interpret numerous biblical passages advocating justice for the poor as calls to encourage national priorities of care for the disadvantaged, including welfare programs. Matthew 25:45, where Jesus castigates those who did not help “the least of these” and Proverbs 31:9, which counsels a wise man to champion the poor, are among the most popular passages cited by religious advocates of welfare programs. Theologians from throughout Christian history, including the fourth-century Bishop Ambrose and post-Reformation Catholics and Protestants, have interpreted

these passages as applying permanently. The same passages are often cited in both Catholic and Protestant contemporary sources (McGreevey 2003; Gassaway 2003).

However, some conservatives point out that there is no direct call for the government to help the poor. There are passages criticizing authorities for oppressing the poor, but there is some difference between actively harming the poor and providing programs to help them. Charity is usually mandated for a specific individual, with the primary purpose of teaching them proper work ethic, as argued by recent conservative Christian authors such as the Catholic writer Michael Novak (1983) and the Presbyterian writer Marvin Olasky (1992). Theologians can, however, interpret contemporary conditions to argue that poverty is such a systemic problem that individuals need to advocate for government programs as part of their charity obligations. For example, while the Bible does not have anything directly to say about health care reform, Christian left and center Catholic and Protestant theologians have argued that we should take note of Jesus's care of the sick and make sure that health care is provided for all (US Catholic Bishops 1981, Edgar 2006).

Conservatives also note that the Bible commands personal responsibility for the poor, arguing that government programs do not cultivate such personal responsibility (Walsh 2000). A favorite passage of conservatives is from the second epistle to the Thessalonians, where Paul states that those who do not work should not eat (e.g. Ballure 2014). Progressives reply that Jesus's call to love the poor transcends debates over personal responsibility (Gassaway 2003).

The Denominational Roots of Poverty Policy in the United States

The sociologist Max Weber and his intellectual descendants argue that the Protestant Reformation contributed greatly to a more negative attitude toward the poor by

focusing on the works that each individual needed to perform in order to be saved. As Kahl (2005) summarized, throughout the middle ages, Catholic beggars were given alms in exchange for promises to pray for the souls of their benefactors. Constant prayer and receiving of the sacraments were more important than past actions and continued hard work to gain material possessions. Protestant reformers such as Martin Luther, and most particularly John Calvin (1509-1564) argued that the prayers of the poor for their benefactors were useless to the souls of those benefactors, because the salvation of someone giving charity was based only on their individual faith in Christ. The salvation of the poor, too, for Protestants, was based on their individual faith, which they had to develop through their own struggle without recourse to the sacraments or the prayers of others. Luther, and especially Calvin, argued for a revival of the notion, which had always been present in Christianity, that hard work was an important way of showing one's fidelity to Christianity. Historians have noted that American attitudes toward the poor have been influenced by the teachings of John Calvin, a Swiss theologian whose followers founded the Presbyterian family of denominations and influenced numerous other Protestant churches (Katz 1996; Tratner 1999). This Calvinistic thinking is derived not only from the theology of the Puritan settlers in America but was also encoded in British law; Max Weber and Weberian scholar Sigrun Kahl classified Britain and the United States as Calvinist countries.

When examining the history of American poverty policy, the Weberian division between Calvinist, Lutheran, and Catholic ideals is a poor way to understand religious influence; in fact, making blanket statements about the views of any denomination or family denominations on poverty is shockingly unhelpful. The most important reason is that a denominational tradition's core attitude toward the poor does not necessarily translate to a

clear program for the state's provision of poverty relief. This is because, when examining denominational traditions carefully, there is plenty of room for adaptation given economic and political considerations. Clergy involved in work with the poor certainly draw on insights from their theological tradition. However, their own roles (for example, whether as the head of a charitable agency or as a pastor priding himself on a strong relationship with business leaders), influence the parts of their theology on which they choose to focus. For American Catholics, the hierarchical nature of their church and the relationship between the Catholic Church in the US and the Vatican have often shaped these debates. For Protestants, the frequent shifting of denominational identities have resulted in mixing of influences between various older denominational traditions and new denominations identifying with the same traditions as but whose priorities in practice are very far apart. It is also rather unfair to categorize all non-Lutheran American Protestants as falling within the Calvinist tradition, although any attempt to further categorize, for example, a separate Wesleyan denominational tradition would be tangential to this project. Thus, it is nearly impossible to convincingly define which individuals and groups do or do not belong to a Calvinist tradition.

Calvin called for a significant emphasis on the building of a strong community, which influenced early Puritan American documents such as the Mayflower Compact and the City on a Hill speech (Morone 2004). Many British and American cities began assistance to the poor known as "outdoor relief" in the seventeenth century, which included direct provision of money or supplies (Kahl 2005). Part of the reason for this was that the Catholic religious orders who had been providing such relief had been suppressed in Britain and were rarely present in the American colonies, so the government was more compelled to address

the problem. But later, as some clergy interpreted Calvin's call for charity, community, and an uncompromising call to create a world in which Christian faith was lived out entirely, they essentially began to advocate for more robust programs of indoor relief. When Calvinism is merged with progressive ideology, Calvinists can be among the most uncompromising supporters of progressive efforts to address poverty.

Yet, there is no doubt that Calvin's emphasis on individual responsibility and hard work was and has been used to justify harsh treatment of the poor. Calvinist countries, including the United Kingdom and the United States, often encouraged local governments to adopt a policy of "indoor relief," which resulted in many of the poor being institutionalized in workhouses. Religious supporters of these policies argued that they successfully balanced the needs of the poor, the development of their character, and economic productivity.

Calvin's theology of predestination, based on his interpretation of biblical passages indicating that God has already decided who will be saved, did not explicitly argue that those in poverty would not be saved. However, as believers began looking for tangible signs of favor from God, poverty began to be used as evidence of moral failure. Morone (2004), writing in the American context, summarized a common set of moral failures deplored by the Puritans and their successors: the sins of addiction, sloth, violence and sexual immorality among the poor—and he argues that the US government has often feared any policy that might encourage them. Morone provides evidence of the origins of public policies from Puritan crusades, which could often be socially communitarian but with the primary purpose of combatting sin rather than providing material aid for its own sake. Marty (1984) provides the example of Henry Ward Beecher, a Congregationalist minister from the second half of the nineteenth century, who stated that a man could feed a wife and six children on a very

low salary as long as he worked hard and did not drink. Finally, many Calvinist denominations had been initially persecuted by governments, and thus retained a suspicion of state power. Denominations who maintained such suspicions preached against the risks of an overly powerful central government, and argued that in order to prevent governments from becoming too powerful, local communities and religious institutions should take care of the poor.

Lutheranism and Catholicism

Lutheran and Catholic influence on poverty policy needs to be placed in the context of the immigrant experience starting from the middle of the nineteenth century. Both groups found it necessary to rely on assistance from local and state governments. At the same time, governments had little interest in providing all of the manpower needed to directly work with the poor. Thus, religious groups were able to come to an agreement with governments to collaborate on taking care of the poor, which included religious instruction.

It should not be surprising that Lutherans would be relatively comfortable with this system. Because early Lutheran countries in Europe had little separation between church and state, they were among the forerunners of early state-run programs for the poor, which included assistance from the Church. Yet Lutherans were required to adapt to an entirely new environment in the United States, given that governmental institutions had no affiliation with Lutheranism. While some Weberian interpretations might have expected them to be at the forefront of the progressive movement in the US, they were a divided, smaller and relatively backwater constituency, which concentrated their political power in a few states in the upper Midwest. While Dorrien (2010) cites Lutheran J. Stuckenberg as a precursor of the social gospel movement in the 1880s, Dorrien does not argue that he was influential.

Lutherans did, however, follow Catholics in setting up local charitable and health care institutions which entered into partnerships with local governments, especially where the Lutheran population was high.

The Catholic Church, by contrast, was used to being the primary caretaker of the poor in Europe. After the Reformation, a new mobilization of charitable orders and lay organizations took up the task of educating the poor on the doctrines and sacraments. As argued by Weber, the Catholic Church seemed less concerned about past actions and work ethic; rather, Catholics became most concerned about the relationships between the poor and their helpers, who should lead each other toward greater formation in Church teachings and practices. When Catholic bishops in the United States argue that mothers should receive welfare even if they are not working, they are acting in a long tradition of Catholic advocacy for aid to the poor regardless of their status of work. In countries where Catholicism was the state religion, governments entrusted poor relief to the Catholic Church, its orders and lay organizations. In countries where the Catholic Church was not dominant but was allowed to exist with relative freedom, as became the case in the United States, the Catholic Church was forced to adapt in order to reach its goals of both helping the poor and catechizing its followers; adaptations which later necessitated support for direct governmental programs. Catholics in the United States would be suspicious of relationships with a government dominated by Protestants, making Catholic support for governmental poverty relief even less likely in the United States than in Catholic countries. Indeed, this was at first the case, and there were many debates within the Catholic Church about participation in American politics (McGreevey 2003).

A revival in Catholic piety which took hold among some immigrants in the mid nineteenth century fostered a devotion to hard work and absolute fidelity to doctrine which is remarkably similar to that described as central to Calvinism. Proponents of this revival often felt that they should be left alone by the US government except to use government institutions to defend the rights of Catholic schools. Yet Catholic charities soon felt so overwhelmed with the numbers of immigrants needing help; since local governments had no wish to provide direct support, Catholic agencies and local governments found mutually beneficial arrangements during the late nineteenth century. This was particularly the case in places where Catholics were able to establish political machines and become elected to local and later state offices (Eerie 1988). As Catholic politicians gained political power in areas dominated by Catholics, especially within the Democratic Party, these arrangements eventually grew to the state level. Financial support of Catholic charities, educational institutions and health facilities by governmental institutions also signified tangible political victories over Protestants opposed to Catholic presence in the United States. Since Catholics soon became both the largest denomination in the United States, the group with the greatest needs for health care, education and welfare, and the denomination with the most centralized method of both obtaining political power and setting up charitable organizations, its influence on poverty policy became permanent (Brown and McKeon 1997).

The following sections will trace the history of Christian approaches to poverty throughout the twentieth century. Beginning with the social gospel, the story moves on through the Great Depression, civil rights movement and conservative backlash. Progressive religious movements, including most mainline and Catholic organizations, went from advocating eccentric and unrealistic economic restructuring, to full advocacy of attempts to

expand the welfare state, to continued support for these attempts in light of post-war prosperity, to a building of defensive strategies when welfare programs became vulnerable to cuts.

The Social Gospel: 1890-1932

The Social Gospel movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was among the most significant periods of religious advocacy for the poor in American history. The most socially conscious clergy looked despairingly at the horrors of urban poverty created by the Industrial Revolution and the continuing struggles of immigrants to achieve a better standard of living. As Katz (1996) explains, the growth of American cities presented special problems for poverty relief. While there was certainly deep hardship and poverty in rural areas as well, especially during times of natural disaster, the urban poor had no ability to produce their own food. Further, the bleak working conditions on factories were more likely to capture the imagination of clergy as a symptom of spiritual decay.

Social gospel advocates developed theological justifications for rights that each person should possess, and looked at the increasing federal regulatory state and state and local governments as possible mechanisms for achieving such rights.³ Progressive Protestant

³ When using terms to describe camps within Protestantism (mainline, evangelical, fundamentalist) in the context of the social gospel, it is important to understand how leaders of the social gospel sought to build a new Christian social movement and a theological orientation across denominations, which was generally opposed to the theology of the fundamentalists which had some support in most denominations at the time. Leaders of the Social Gospel often had influences from several denominations, not only on their views of the economy, but also on their views of moral theology. Walter Rauschenbusch, a German Baptist, was the son of a former Lutheran minister, and avidly read the Congregationalist theologian Horace Bushnell. Congregationalist Washington Gladden started his ministerial career at a congregation that had just split from Methodism, and also read Anglican theologians (Dorrien 2010). Even Catholic Father John Ryan, like the Protestant social gospel leaders, was significantly influenced by Protestant economist Richard Ely (Dorrien 2010). While most of these leaders could be described as mainline Protestants because their denominations later came to be identified with the mainline and took up some of the social gospel's commitment to the concept of social justice, many of the social gospel's leaders also used the term evangelical to describe themselves.

clergy and Catholic clergy tended to use quite different arguments to develop these ideas.⁴ Yet they had other ideas for implementing their goals, and were in fact more suspicious of large welfare programs than most progressive religious leaders have been in the past several decades. While they were, by the standards of today, quite conservative on issues of family formation and governmental spending, they still aroused the suspicions of fundamentalist factions within Protestantism.

Intellectual questions surrounding the appropriate role of property were paramount. The question of property is even more central to discussions of religion and poverty in this period because religious leaders devoted more attention to it than to efforts on behalf of the establishment of a welfare state. The welfare state solution, to provide services that the working poor cannot afford and to take care of the unemployed poor and their families, was largely considered to be a weaker alternative or a supplement to reforms in the distribution of land, profit, or both. One of the cornerstones of the 1908 *Social Creed of the Churches* was a call for “the most equitable division of the products of industry that can ultimately be devised.” Debates about private property intensified around one of the most innovative and influential proposals on the course of American religion; Henry George’s idea of the single tax on land in the 1870s. George’s view was that productive activity should not be taxed, and this would lead to more profitable economic activity for the poor. Pope Leo XIII’s encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891) was partially a reaction to the single tax ideas, to which the Catholic Church was very much opposed because, based on Thomistic theology, it prioritized private property. Based on the high level of labor union activity in the United

⁴ Father John Ryan’s significant individual effort was the primary factor which accelerated the development of American Catholic social teaching, which changed the focus of the Catholic Church from defending Catholic autonomy in a majority Protestant country toward using a Catholic perspective to improve conditions for all Americans (McGreevey 2003; Dorrien 2010).

States and Europe, *Rerum Novarum* argued that the state should lightly regulate the relationship between labor unions and capitalists so that workers are paid adequately for their productivity. The idea of a state-imposed living wage was interpreted as one of these regulations. *Rerum Novarum* (paragraph 20) states that workers have a right to fair wages, while paragraph 47 implies that workers should ideally be able to own property. *Rerum Novarum* focuses most of its secular remedies on the necessity of other protections for workers, who deserve a reasonable compensation for their labor. It argues that governments should have some right to make sure that workers are allowed to join labor unions, that unions and employers should negotiate fairly, and that working conditions should be regulated (RN 36). 40 years later, these ideas were reiterated in another papal encyclical, *Quadregesimo Anno* 91-95 (Zeba 2015).

Protestant social gospel activists, on the other hand, modified George's ideas by arguing for schemes where capitalists would share ownership of the corporations with their workers. They hoped that these ideas would not require much state regulation; businesses who refused to share profits would not attract workers, and there would be clear improvements beneficial to all because of fairer income distribution. The idea of the minimum wage or living wage, then, was a small step in that direction (Dorrien 2010).

While Catholics and Protestants developed ideas of living wages and regulations of working conditions from some different theological directions, both social teaching movements bolstered their intellectual claims with the biblical story of the creation, where God instructed mankind to work for food, and that since all are made in God's image, all should be able to obtain food if they work. Snarr (2011) describes how Catholic Father John Ryan (author of the 1906 book *Living Wage*) and Northern Baptist theologian Walter

Rauschenbusch (author of the 1907 book *Christianity and the Social Order*), are two of the three intellectuals most influential on the contemporary living wage movement, along with Martin Luther King.

In addition to devoting more attention to the question of ownership, social gospel advocates were far more socially conservative than most progressive religious advocates of recent decades. Protestant social gospel advocates and those Catholics with whom they occasionally collaborated on progressive issues prioritized conservative values of sobriety, religious faith and family, and they tended to favor limits on governmental solutions. Protestant activists almost universally allied with evangelicals in supporting Prohibition and other priorities of fundamentalists. Liberal Protestants were so supportive of Prohibition that they mostly supported Republicans largely over that issue in 1928 and even 1932 (Dorrien 2010). One of the few Catholic public figures who leaned toward supporting Prohibition was Father John Ryan, the founder of the American Catholic social teaching tradition.

Protestant and Catholic social activists also supported women staying at home with children, and the primary reason they supported living wage policies was so that men who had jobs could raise families without their wives working for pay (Dorrien 2010). The Catholic Church most particularly incorporated this view in their official teaching.

Quadregesimo Anno defines a fair wage as one which allows the support of a family (Paragraph 71), and ideally allows for savings (Paragraph 74). However, *Quadregesimo Anno*'s discussion of fair wages implies a conservative model of the family; paragraph 71 states that women, at least mothers of children, should not work outside the home. *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadregesimo Anno* repeatedly emphasize the importance of discipline in family life. While the family wage concept is particularly emphasized in Catholic thought, it

was also a principle of American and European social policy advocated by Protestants and secular policy makers until about the 1970s (Chappell 2010). The idea of a family wage is now controversial among living wage advocates, many of whom disagree with the traditional family as consisting of a male head of household. The argument that families can be supported more easily and possibly even buy property if they receive higher wages, is still coherent no matter the structure of the family. However, it is possible to argue that at least the encyclicals before Vatican II and some Protestant social gospel thought imply that minimum wages are not worth pursuing from a Christian perspective if they are not family wages. Additionally, both early Catholic social teaching documents and Protestant social gospel documents call on workers, as well as capitalists, to renew their own personal piety; workers should remember Jesus's teachings that poverty is spiritually beneficial and so should not envy the rich, while the rich should remember their duty to the poor because of Christian principles (RN 21-23; Rauschenbusch 1907).

There were also caveats to social gospel and Catholic support of progressive policies, even on the issue of just wages. The Federal Council of Churches' founding document, *The Social Creed of the Churches* (1908), notes that the living wage should be at the "amount that each industry can afford." Catholic support for the minimum wage, meanwhile, has been tempered by the principle of subsidiarity, which calls for limits on state power. Subsidiarity, while prefigured by theologians since the early church, is first articulated in paragraphs 80-82 of *Quadregesimo Anno*, shortly after the discussion of fair wages. Subsidiarity is defined as the principle that no larger organization should solve problems that a smaller organization can solve; thus, the federal government should not do what a local government can do, the local government should not do what a community

organization can do, and a community organization or church charity should not do what a family can do. Thus, the primary debate in Catholic social teaching concerns the extent to which the federal government is the smallest institution which can solve economic and social problems. Abela (2008) argues that subsidiarity's placement after the discussion of wages implies that minimum wage laws are among those regulations which should be very limited by the principle of subsidiarity. His case is strengthened by the discussion of wages itself; for example, Paragraph 74 mentions that wages that are too low or too high may cause unemployment. Thus, industries which cannot be productive with high wage levels should not be subject to minimum wage regulations. Direct income support and service programs such as welfare and health care must be placed at even greater scrutiny with the principle of subsidiarity.

Finally, as alluded to at the beginning of this section, religious liberals and leaders of denominations were also largely skeptical of governmental income support programs. This was especially the case for the Catholic Church. *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadregesimo Anno* did not argue for widespread welfare. Paragraph 14 of *Rerum Novarum* states "True, if a family finds itself in exceeding distress, utterly deprived of the counsel of friends, and without any prospect of extricating itself, it is right that extreme necessity be met by public aid, since each family is a part of the commonwealth." However, this statement is placed in the context of a denunciation of overwhelming involvement of government in the economy. *Quadregesimo Anno*, in the midst of the Great Depression, simply extended support for the living wage and called for more cooperation rather than calling for comprehensive welfare. However, as the social crisis continued, religious activists began to realize the necessity of welfare programs, arguing that it was immoral for so many unemployed workers, the

disabled and children to be without food. Meanwhile, *The Social Creed of the Churches*, adopted in 1908 by the newly founded Council of Churches (adapted from a social creed passed the year before by Methodists), stopped short of calling for a comprehensive welfare system; however, its call for “the abatement of poverty,” while focusing on living wage and labor regulations, included calls for the aid of the unemployed, elderly and injured. A decade later, The National Catholic Welfare Council (in a program written almost entirely by John Ryan), focused on labor issues and warned against bureaucracies which could be inefficient and cause a lack of self-sufficiency. It did, however, endorse social insurance for the unemployed, elderly, injured and sick in 1919, and a public housing program (Reichley 1985; Massaro 2007). Mainline Protestants used nearly exactly similar language when updating their social creed in 1932 at the height of the Great Depression (Walsh 2000; Dorrien 2010).

It has already been explained that the Catholic Church’s support for the welfare state was at first limited by the global hierarchy’s relative conservatism and debates over engagement with the American state. What factors limited support for the welfare state within Protestantism? Even the relatively hesitant adoption of the welfare state ideal by the social gospel was opposed by some evangelical and fundamentalist activists, and they had many footholds in some of the same churches as the social gospel advocates. The history of evangelical worship and fundamentalist biblical criticism before the mid- to late-twentieth century is largely one of conservatives mobilizing support within large denominations, rather than leaving en masse to form a new evangelical identity and abandon their denominational identities (Marty 1984; Marsden 1994).⁵

⁵ Disputes over biblical interpretations did result in the forming of some new denominations, most importantly the Assemblies of God and several other large Pentecostal denominations which are now most of

Although by today's standards many of the social gospel's leaders held conservative views of theology, many sought to promote reforms in the ways in which Christians interpreted the Bible given new scholarship, which caused conflicts with fundamentalists that extended to views of social witness. Many modernists also held a progressive view of history, arguing that through development of a more accurate theology (including a less literal interpretation of the Bible) and economic modernization, social problems would be resolved and God's kingdom would become fully realized on Earth (Hutchison 1992). Postmillennialism also became popular among theological modernists; this view of theology where Christ would come a thousand years after God's kingdom was realized on Earth. Some, though certainly not all, postmillennials believed that struggling for social progress and providing for the poor was a way for people to bring God's kingdom to the Earth.⁶

Marsden (1994) argues that the social witness of fundamentalists declined, or at least was restricted to preaching and localized charity work, because they were unwilling to be seen as promoting social critiques that were being promoted by the modernist-dominated social gospel movement. The fundamentalist backlash against the social gospel could be compared to the Christian Right's backlash against Christian progressives in the late twentieth century. However, there are some key qualifications. First, it is even less likely

the largest NAE denominations between the 1890s and 1910s. Yet, as literature on the Christian Right reminds us, these denominations had limited national political involvement until the 1970s. In fact, there were actually more significant denominational splits between northern and southern branches of most denominational traditions before and during the Civil War than the splits that occurred in mainline Protestant denominations during the late nineteenth and most of the twentieth century.

⁶ Postmillennials were opposed by premillennials, who believed that Jesus's return was imminent. Some, though certainly not all, premillennialists believed that little could be done to solve social problems before that. Some fundamentalists, especially Pentecostals, and including premillennials, had a strong social witness as well, and thus it is unwise to hypothesize a direct relationship between views on the apocalypse and economic policy.

that fundamentalists would have been willing to support progressive governmental efforts even without the theological controversies over modernism, given that even social gospel activists were conflicted. Until fundamentalists could be persuaded that social witness involved more systematic efforts to address material needs, rather than community-based efforts flanked by gospel preaching, their opposition to progressive politics was likely to continue. Fundamentalist backlash also occurred without the sort of partisan polarization that has occurred in recent decades. The Democratic Party continued to enjoy the support of most southern Protestants of all theological orientations, along with the majority of Catholics of all theological orientations. The Republican Party continued to hold the support of the majority of northern Protestants, including the supporters of the social gospel. The Republicans' failure to react promptly to the societal problems of the Great Depression weakened their support among religious progressives, however.

The Roosevelt, Truman and Eisenhower Administrations

During the Great Depression, Catholic and mainline Protestant religious organizations permanently began to demand the welfare state as a matter of social justice. But their primary orientation concerned their interests as religious charities, beginning a period of significant influence over Congress by Catholic charities. In 1935, the National Catholic Welfare Council and Catholic Charities were involved in the legislative process around the Social Security Act, as documented by Brown and McKeon (1997) in their research on the history of Catholic Charities. As noted earlier, while Pope Pius XI's 1931 encyclical *Quadregesimo Anno* sought to continue a tradition of Catholic social witness, it did not necessarily advocate in favor of the welfare state. Yet, it left open the possibility for the American hierarchy to do so, as a subsidiarist response to American problems.

While Catholic leaders were philosophically in favor of the Social Security Act's key provisions such as benefits for the elderly and the Aid to Dependent Children program, their primary concern, especially for Catholic Charities, was protecting the rights of Catholic agencies to care for Catholic children without intervention from state social services. The Catholic Bishops negotiated with the Roosevelt administration while Catholic Charities focused on lobbying Congress. When provisions on these matters were finally negotiated to Catholic Charities' satisfaction, Catholic lobbyists promised to work for passage of the Social Security Act as a whole. While there was no Catholic testimony at committee hearings on the Social Security Act, Brown and McKeon provide evidence that Catholic Charities executive secretary John O'Grady persuaded many reluctant congressmen to vote for the legislation, particularly a letter from Edwin E. Witte, Director of the President's Committee on Economic Security.

There is little similar available evidence of activism by mainline Protestant denominations on behalf of the New Deal, even though most denominations supported it in principle (Walsh 2000). Reichley (1985) finds that there were still significant factions in mainline Protestantism which opposed the New Deal and had ties to the conservative wing of the Republican Party. Anti-Catholic sentiment in mainline Protestantism was also a factor. Additionally, Catholic leaders had more significant ties to the Roosevelt administration through the adherents of the majority of Catholics to the Democratic Party, and Catholics had more incentive to lobby for the interests of their own agencies because of their work with poor, Catholic immigrant populations.

Meanwhile, Allison Green, in recent work for Schulman and Zelizer (2015)'s edited volume on politics and religion, examines letters written by rank and file clergy in response

to a widely distributed presidential letter seeking religious input on the New Deal in 1935. Green argues that the vast majority of clergy were enthusiastically supportive of the Social Security Act, in addition to other New Deal programs to bolster employment. She particularly emphasizes support of the New Deal by southern clergy, noting that among Protestants, there was little difference in the attitudes of ministers based on their denominational tradition or their orientation toward fundamentalism. Concerns for the poor in their own congregations motivated the writing of many of these letters. Southern support for the New Deal and loyalty to the Democratic Party and the Roosevelt's willingness to compromise with southern congressmen on racial policies, encouraged ministers to support the New Deal. Yet a practical recognition that religious charity could not sufficiently ameliorate poverty, backed by a willingness to consider theologies of social responsibility by the state to the poor, were also factors. The Southern Baptist Convention, however, turned against the New Deal in the late 1930s. Green presents this change as primarily because of concerns about the Church's administration of educational and retirement programs, rather than its theological concerns about government intervention in the economy as a whole which became a part of its public policy orientation several decades later.

Congressional committee records demonstrate that John O'Grady of Catholic Charities continued to be the most powerful religious lobbyist on poverty policy through the Eisenhower Administration, as he testified at numerous hearings (Public Works; Social Security Act 1939; Unemployment Compensation 1945; Social Security Act 1946; 1954; 1955; 1958, Unemployment Compensation 1959). O'Grady certainly supported increased funds for the Social Security program, Aid to Dependent Children and unemployment

compensation, but a closer look at his testimonies shows the continuing concerns of Catholic Charities about its own rights in child welfare as significant motivations for its involvement. O'Grady was usually the only religious witness at these hearings, but representatives of the National Council of Churches joined him in 1954 and 1955.

Meanwhile, in the health care arena, the later stages of the New Deal also included examination of reforms in the health care system. Representatives of Catholic and Protestant hospitals testified before Congress at the same hearings as early as 1939, with the primary objective of maintaining the autonomy of religious hospitals, while supporting governmental efforts to help pay for the indigent patients in some cases (National health Insurance 1939, 1945). During the Truman administration's efforts to pass health care reform, organizations representing Catholic and Protestant hospitals were opposed (Altman 2010). However, Catholic health agencies benefited greatly from hospital construction and other programs initiated by the Hill-Burton Act. Schafer (2012) finds that Catholic hospitals received the majority of the funding, followed by mainline Protestant denominations. However, he notes that even the hospitals of conservative denominations which were suspicious of state assistance to religious organizations such as the Southern Baptists and Adventists, were significantly aided by Hill-Burton funds.

After World War II, economically progressive Christians mobilized to combat poverty based on the belief that governments have a duty to take care of the poor. Mainline Protestants undertook a series of nationwide conferences and local congregational surveys to examine the extent of poverty and the appropriate Christian responses after the founding of the National Council of Churches in the 1950s (Wuthnow and Evans 2002). In May 1955, George Higgins, Director of the Social Action Department of the National Catholic Welfare

Council, testified at a hearing before the Senate Subcommittee on Labor; Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, regarding studies about the results of minimum wage increases. In May 1959, representatives of the National Council of Churches, United Church of Christ, and George Higgins of the National Catholic Welfare Council, testified in support of a minimum wage increase in a hearing before the Senate Subcommittee on Labor regarding amendments to the Fair Labor Standards Act. Amendments to the Fair Labor Standards Act were not passed during that year's legislative session.

Conservative Protestants, meanwhile, remained largely quiet on economic issues during the 1940s and 1950s. The National Association of Evangelicals, founded in 1943, sought to bring evangelical denominations sympathetic to fundamentalist theology into broader engagement with American intellectual and political life, but as noted by Schafer (2012) and Worthen (2015), most of their official resolutions and lobbying work consisted of anti-communist activities and criticisms of moral vices such as gambling. Their resolution on the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1958, rather than supporting minimum wage increases, sought to provide exemptions for religious organizations.

Relations between religious and business leaders appeared to be central to the conservatism of evangelicals. *Christianity Today*, the largest evangelical magazine, was owned by J. Howard Pew, who threatened to withdraw financial support if critiques of capitalism appeared in the magazine. Indeed, Cruce (2013) argues that the support of business leaders even extended to mainline Protestant ministers such as Norman Vincent Peale, who allowed his self-help book, *The Power of Positive Thinking*, to be used as justification for conservative views on poverty. While religious conservatives did little to directly attack social programs, their lack of support for them during a time of little partisan

polarization, indicates that the seeds of the Christian Right were planted well before the culture wars of the 1970s.

Civil Rights, the War on Poverty and the Basic Income Movement: 1963 to 1970

During the 1960s, all roads were leading toward a vibrant religious anti-poverty movement. There were theological responses to the civil rights movement and student movements; in the case of Catholicism, there were new directions from the international hierarchy. While all this caused strain within denominations, they provided a path by which both moderates and the far left within the churches could renew their social consciousness. Meanwhile, the Presidency and Congress were interested in not only keeping the New Deal programs, but also expanding them, and religious groups were called upon to contribute their expertise with the poor. This hospitable environment continued even through the first term of the Nixon administration, when the US Congress nearly passed a Family Assistance Program. During the debate over the FAP, the Catholic Church and mainline Protestants united behind a clear argument: the US can afford to take care of poor families, such services should be provided comprehensively through the state, and, far from breaking up families as conservatives claimed, income support would foster family formation.

Catholic responses to poverty shifted with the papacy of John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council in the early 1960s. Pope John XXIII declared in his encyclical *Pacem in Terris* in 1963 that health care and social services are human rights. This document, released during the early stages of the Second Vatican Council, marks a shift in the Church's teaching on poverty. It boldly states "first We must speak of man's rights. Man has the right to live. He has the right to bodily integrity and to the means necessary for the proper development of life, particularly food, clothing, shelter, medical care, rest, and, finally, the

necessary social services.” The Second Vatican Council’s Apostolic Constitution puts the right to be kept out of poverty in similar terms, as did subsequent statements from the American Catholic Bishops (Berryman 1989). The NCC agreed with Catholic rights rhetoric on poverty, following with a statement in 1968 endorsing the concept of a guaranteed income, which stated that such a system “should be available as a matter of right, with need as the sole criterion of eligibility” and it should be administered so as to adjust benefits to changes in cost of living”, while afterwards noting that it “should be designed to afford incentive to productive activity” but argues that society is responsible for programs on behalf of those not working because our “socioeconomic system works imperfectly.” This statement was used in congressional hearings even a decade later (Administration’s Welfare Reform Proposal 1977).

While the calls of progressive Christians for social justice generally appear to be broadly defined, religious groups responded to two major factors which modified their views on poverty; the United States’ relative economic prosperity and a call for social change based on the Civil Rights Movement. The National Council of Churches particularly highlighted a belief that since economic prosperity of the nation as a whole has increased, meaning that there are plenty of resources for all, no one should be in poverty. A 1966 NCC statement on concern for public assistance stated “our burgeoning productivity makes possible, and our Judeo-Christian ethic of justice makes mandatory, the development of economic policies and structures under which all people, regardless of employment status, are assured an adequate livelihood.” The NCC’s 1969 resolution on hunger asks churches to pressure the government to ensure that families should be able to eat with an adequate diet at no more than 25% of their income.

The National Council of Churches was particularly called to respond to the Civil Rights Movement because it included most of the major black Protestant denominations. Additionally, some of the mainline denominations had substantial black membership, along with white ministers and lay leaders who were involved in the Civil Rights Movement. To be sure, there were racial tensions in the NCC, as described in James Farmer's book *Church People in the Struggle*. However, it is clear that the Civil Rights Movement influenced the approach by the NCC and many of its denominations to poverty, both by highlighting disproportionate poverty faced by the black community, and by providing a popular, religiously infused movement which they could use in order to think about their broad view of social justice.⁷ Tipton (2007) points out that the National Council of Churches first set up a permanent legislative office in 1964 to support the Civil Rights Act. NCC leaders had testified along with Catholic leaders on poverty before (Social Security Act 1954, 1955; Fair Labor Standards Act 1961; Public Assistance 1962), but having a legislative office made the NCC more visible at the legislative level, leading to more testimony at committee hearings. Tipton (2007) quotes interviews indicating that the National Council of Churches had a strong relationship with some congressional Democrats as they lobbied for Great Society programs, including those significantly aimed at the black community. Witnesses affiliated with the NCC testified at three different sets of hearings in support of the Economic Opportunity Act and later amendments during the 1960s, which was largely designed to

⁷ Disproportionate poverty in the African-American community continued to be a common talking point for advocacy especially by progressive Protestants in subsequent debates on welfare and the minimum wage, especially when working to ally with black churches.

boost African-American employment. One witness was the President of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1966 (Economic Opportunity Act 1964; 1966; 1967).⁸

Throughout the Johnson administration, mainline denominational leaders, mainline and Catholic women's groups, and the Catholic bishop, charitable agency liaison and lobbyist Raymond Gallagher testified at committee hearings in support of the War on Poverty and the Great Society. To be sure, they called for better treatment for the poor based on religious principles, especially on their testimony related to social security and Medicare (War on Poverty as it Affects Older Americans 1965) and wide-ranging hearings (Examination of the War on Poverty 1967), but even in these they focused on the areas where religiously affiliated service organizations and businesses could and could not assist. Much of the rest of the testimony supported the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 and the Social Security amendments of 1967, which expanded contracting by the federal government by religious organizations, turning this practice from an expedient arrangement adopted by some state and local governments to a permanent part of federal policy. Meanwhile, scholars are often vague when they briefly mention the NCC's involvement in the War on Poverty, and their discussion often turns out to be a mobilization of community-based charity and work with the poor. For example, when Chappell (2011) mentions the NCC's participation in what she calls the liberal anti-poverty coalition, it is in the context of its participation in the Citizens Crusade against Poverty, a grassroots effort led by Walter Reuther of the United Auto Workers. This also included the mainline women's groups

⁸ There is also scholarship on the extent to which Catholics and progressive evangelicals were impacted by the Civil Rights Movement. Some Catholic activists worked in the Civil Rights movement, and there were prominent efforts to address racism within the Church related to its relatively small black membership and its large and growing Latino membership, which faced disproportionate poverty (McGreevey 2003; Massaro 2007). Gassaway (2003) and Swartz (2012) note that the civil rights movement was a primary motivation and source of theological discussion and political action among progressive evangelical leaders such as Jim Wallis of Sojourners, which was intimately connected with their calls for economic justice.

Church Women United and the United Methodist Women's Division, along with the National Council of Catholic Women.

Schafer (2012) notes that evangelical minister Billy Graham, an advisor to several presidents, quietly supported the expansion of the Social Security Act. But the National Association of Evangelicals, Southern Baptist Convention, and most other evangelical organizations are difficult to find in examinations of congressional hearings on poverty from this period or afterward. While they had a long history of being wary of entanglements with the government and had been particularly opposed to governmental support of the Catholic Church, a fundamental shift had occurred by the 1960s. Schafer (2012) notes reports from the 1950s from internal proceedings of evangelical organizations and the magazine *Christianity Today* indicating that conservative Protestants were already taking government funding for their organizations despite denominational disapproval, particularly in the area of health care. In the early 1960s, evangelical leaders held several conferences where there was cautious acceptance of evangelical organizations taking governmental funding. Thus, evangelical organizations received funding in the expansion of relationships with the federal government toward religiously affiliated social services during the Johnson administration.

If religious groups are notable for their views on justice, charitable expertise and family, it is not surprising that the debate over the Family Assistance Program would be a high point of their activity. Once limited mostly to widows in many states, participation in these programs such as Aid to Families with Dependent Children was opened up to unmarried mothers, especially those who supported children on their own. While rules varied by state, usually poor families with a two-parent household did not qualify for welfare because one of the parents (usually the father) was expected to work. A father who

cannot find a job would ideally be covered by unemployment if he was able-bodied, or Social Security if not (Katz 1996).

However, churches were among the groups concerned about this system. Progressives believed that benefits were not substantial enough to get families out of poverty. The precursors of what I now call the Christian Center, such as the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, agreed with these concerns, but they added a discussion of welfare's effects on families. There was concern that since there was less support for married couples with children, marriage became a less attractive option for women, who may still have children. While Chappell (2011) argues that the National Council of Churches and other progressives went along with the Catholic Bishops in supporting the idea of the two-parent family as ideal, and evidence from committee hearing transcripts confirm this, her narrative makes clear that Catholics devoted more attention to this issue. Both mainline and Catholic hierarchies also saw that single mothers had to make choices between receiving meager benefits, and working low wage jobs while also having to pay for childcare. Finally, mainline and Catholic organizations also acknowledged the particular challenges of the black community and other racial minorities, which had been blocked from receiving many welfare programs during the New Deal (Katznelson 2000).

Groups across the political spectrum saw a Family Assistance Program, or negative income tax, as a possible solution to some of these problems. Under the mainstream FAP proposals of the time, families would receive an allowance based on the number of children. Those families with a working parent would still receive some benefits, until they made enough to be in a higher income bracket. Some proposals gave access to this program only to married couples, which would have been a complete change in direction from recent

poverty policies, or built in other incentives for married couples. All in all, the program was designed as an incentive for the poor to work and form stable families.

Joint testimony by representatives of the Catholic Bishops office of Social Development, NCC and Jewish congregations before the Senate Finance Committee exemplifies the religious argument. John Cosgrove of the Catholic Conference took the lead, while the others answered questions. A senator noted that Finance Committee staff had told him of the organizations' close working relationship in developing the testimony. Cosgrove criticized AFDC from a primarily progressive direction, arguing that its benefits were too low and that the working poor usually lost benefits when they could still improve their circumstances through further benefits, while also noting that it was administratively frustrating for local and state governments. Integrating concern for the poor with its conservative view of the family, Cosgrove pushed back against the emerging Christian Right's view of the welfare state as an inefficient idea which leads the poor away from self-sufficiency, faith and family. As Cosgrove argued, it is insufficient to say that family breakdown causes poverty; rather, poverty causes family breakdown. In an effort to merge moral exhortation and pragmatic solutions, they pointed out to cultural conservatives that government assistance and a larger welfare state could bolster family life and conservative sexual morality that they desired to uphold.

For example, they noted that AFDC was inequitable because half of states do not have a similar program for unemployed fathers. Just as the Catholic lobbyists promoted progressive arguments, the mainline Protestants were willing to promote conservative arguments for the common goal. As Chappell (2010) notes in a critique of what she calls the

liberal anti-poverty coalition, the National Council of Churches and other liberal Protestants went along with Catholic arguments which privileged the two-parent family.

The religious witnesses were challenged by senators as they argued that mothers should not have to work in order to receive benefits, in a discussion which would be quite familiar to those studying the 1995-1996 welfare reform battles. The religious witnesses also faced questions about the cost of the program. They argued that the long-term social benefits of the program would make up temporary costs. Their answers, filled with facts and statistics as they were, relied on moral arguments when questioned, noting that churches should only provide direction, and rely on legislators to iron out details. When asked whether the program should be funded by tax increases, only the Jewish representative answered affirmatively, while the Catholic and mainline representatives stated that they were not responsible for deciding how the program would be funded. In an example of Hofrening (1995)'s concept of prophetic lobbying, they argued that the FAP would improve the morality of the country and its government, and thus should be instituted by any means necessary.

An extensive summary by McAndrews (2012) and evidence from congressional hearing testimony show evidence of religious lobbying activity by Catholics and mainliners. The US Catholic Conference's statement *Life in Our Day* (1968) advocated a 'family allowance' program instead of the current welfare system. When President Nixon's FAP proposal was released in 1969, the NCC was among its immediate supporters, and Nixon, encouraged by some of his Catholic advisors such as Daniel Patrick Moynihan, actively courted the Catholic Bishops' support. Bishop (later Cardinal) Joseph Bernardin, who would soon coin the term "seamless garment" for the Church's political positions, was among

those directing the Church's public policies on social action, and he encouraged strong support of FAP, along with the lay directors of the Bishops' Social Action department. In October 1969, the administration specifically invited the Catholic Conference to testify before Congress on behalf of the FAP. Representatives of the NCC and Catholic Bishops testified together for the Senate Agriculture Committee, primarily to support FAP proposals (Food Stamp Program and Commodity Distribution 1969). In April 1970, the Catholic Bishops, the National Council of Churches and Jewish congregations presented a joint statement to the US House of Representatives as it was debating the bill. It positively noted that the FAP required most recipients to register for job training opportunities, a compromise proposal between a work mandate and a work incentive. It argued for benefits to be increased and for eligibility to be extended to individuals and childless couples (McAndrews 2012). The Catholic Conference and Catholic Charities also expressed their intentions to ask Catholics to directly lobby for FAP by contacting members of Congress. Mainline and Catholic parishes joined a Welfare Reform weekend in June which engaged discussion among adult and youth groups in churches (McAndrews 2012). In August 1970, the President met with Catholic bishops at the White House, and expressed gratitude for religious support of FAP.

While the religious groups presented a united front in these early hearings, it became clear that the Catholic Bishops were more willing to compromise than the NCC. Seeing an important ally, the Nixon administration sought to maintain Catholic support, including frequent meetings between the Department of Health, Education and Welfare and Catholic Charities. Cosgrove supported increased benefits, guarantees of the federal government's role as employer of last resort, and an increase in housing programs beyond what had

already been mandated, yet he made it clear that any bill establishing a FAP was a step in the right direction (Family Assistance 1970). However, in early 1971 the National Council of Churches withdrew from an agreement to support the program because an amended proposal to satisfy Senate conservatives was not generous enough (McAndrews 2012). NCC representatives testified at a congressional hearing to this effect in April 1971 (Social Security Act 1971). The NCC and Synagogue Council encouraged the Catholic Conference to sign a Tri-Faith proposal on welfare reform which promised to advocate for legislation which provided benefits up to the poverty line, along with minimum wage, job training and work requirement exemptions for mothers of young children. McAndrews argues that Cosgrove and other Catholic lobbyists agreed substantively with the statement, but the Bishops refused to sign it for tactical reasons. McAndrews (2012) describes, however, the eventual shift in Catholic attitudes toward the FAP; Cosgrove eventually testified against an even less generous proposal in 1972. Nixon, once complimentary about the Catholic Bishops, now sought to mobilize Catholics who were to the right of the Bishops on economic and racial issues, undercutting the teaching authority of the Bishops on economics (McAndrews 2012). The Catholic Conference and the NCC did, however, eventually part ways as the National Council of Churches refused to support the more conservative version of the FAP.

False Restarts to the War on Poverty: 1971-1980

With the defeat of the Family Assistance Program, religious groups realized along with other anti-poverty advocates that broad-based, progressive reforms were less likely for the time being. In the 1970s, religious anti-poverty advocacy became increasingly centered on questions of domestic health care and food policy. Meanwhile, the politics of culture war

issues such as abortion threatened to derail the relationship between Catholic associations and liberal politicians, and opened the way for a mobilization of the Right in evangelicalism.

Religious health care agencies testified prominently at congressional hearings in 1971. In 1974, representatives from a variety of Catholic and mainline Protestant organizations testified at a hearing of the House Ways and Means Committee about national health insurance. Organizations testifying included the National Council of Churches, the Lutheran Council, the United Church of Christ, the Church of the Brethren (an Anabaptist NCC denomination), the Friends Committee on National Legislation (on behalf of a Quaker NCC denomination), the United States Catholic Conference, the Catholic Hospital Association, and Network Catholic Social Justice Lobby. All of these representatives told of their own organizations' experiences with the current health care system's inability to provide enough care to the poor, and advocated reform.⁹

During the Ford administration, an organization called the Inter-Religious Task Force on Food Policy frequently mobilized faith-based groups to testify before congressional committees and conduct other forms of insider lobbying, with the goal of increasing funding for food stamps and other programs to insure that hunger is alleviated among children and others in poverty. The most significant accomplishment of this initiative, which had the support of mainline and Catholic hierarchies, was their successful work which influenced Congress to eliminate the purchase requirement for food stamps in 1977 (Reichley 1985). Tipton (2007) presents the decision to focus on food policy as a

⁹ The impact of Protestant health care lobbyists as compared with Catholic health care lobbyists during this period is a worthy subject for future research. When examining congressional hearing transcripts from ProQuest, representatives of Protestant hospitals often testified without their Catholic counterparts during the 1970s, while during the late 1970s and 1980s Catholic and protestant hospital administrators usually testified on the same panels; by the mid-1980s Catholics were often testifying on their own.

product of the persistence of George Chauncey of the mainline Presbyterians, who founded the organization from a committee of the Washington Interreligious Staff Council.

Meanwhile, the mainline denominations created Interfaith Impact (bolstered by funding and lobbying leadership from the Presbyterian Church), the National Council of Churches started a Crusade on Hunger, and Bread for the World, a non-denominational coalition of congregations with a commitment to charitable giving combined with public policy advocacy, expanded its lobbying. Lobbyists interviewed by Tipton (2007) suggest that hunger became a defining issue for religious lobbyists because the crises of the Civil Rights movement and Vietnam War had ended, hunger was a frequent topic of media discussions, and denominations were able to cooperate well because there were gaps in their own treatment of the issue, along with little opposition to providing some resources. On the other hand, another advantage was the ease with which charitable agencies could lend their expertise and support. Most of these efforts focused at first on world hunger, but the NCC's Crusade on Hunger did attract the backing of progressive Republican senator Mark Hatfield for its domestic policies, and its director, Patricia Young, testified at a hearing on food stamp reform in 1975, where she discussed data about families lacking food because they were not able to apply or were denied in their applications for food stamps. She quoted the Catholic Bishops' statement against food stamp cuts and included their policy resolutions along with the NCC's resolutions, providing evidence of the importance the NCC placed on maintaining an interfaith coalition for domestic welfare policy (Food Stamp Reform 1975). Patricia Young of the NCC responded to Democratic senator James Allen by praising the work of church funds but appealing to the increasing complexity of society. Earlier in her testimony, she had asserted that part of the charitable activities of churches in recent years is

helping people fill out food stamp applications (Food Stamp Reform 1975).¹⁰ Tipton (2007) describes the Ford administration as “sympathetic but not particularly responsive” to the increasing religious lobbying on hunger, while the Carter administration gave religious groups significant access. Carter set the tone during his presidential campaign in 1976 when he proposed the idea of a White House Conference on Families, discussed above, in a speech for Catholic Charities. Meanwhile, while the religious food policy lobbyists increasingly turned their attention to domestic hunger by lobbying for reforms in the administration of food stamps, they also gained opportunities to testify at broader welfare reform hearings.

In the fall of 1977, a joint congressional committee undertook a series of hearings on proposals by the Carter administration to reform welfare, which have been described as a downsized version of FAP (Chappell 2011). Though Congress was controlled by Democrats at the time, progress was still slow, yet religious groups and other lobbyists representing the poor were granted significant access. Robert Strommen of the National Council of Churches and United Church of Christ Home Ministries was among those testifying, but while he represented denominational hierarchies, his interactions with members of Congress show that they saw him as a leader of religious charitable agencies who wished to have government take on the work for which they themselves are responsible. He told Michigan Republican Guy Vander Jagt that church organizations are not able to perform the comprehensive services that government can perform. Lawrence Corkeran and Edward Ryle

¹⁰ In a House Agriculture committee hearing in 1976 which was unusually packed with clergy representatives, religious witnesses included George Chauncey of the Interreligious Task Force on US Food Policy and Lawrence Corkeran of Catholic Charities (both on the same panel), a representative of the United Church of Christ (mainline Congregationalist) Home Ministries, and several additional Catholic witnesses, including Francis Lally of the US Catholic Conference, Catholic Sister Betty Barrett of the Chicago Food Stamp Coalition, and a representative from the National Council of Catholic Women (Food Stamp Reform Part 2 1976).

then testified on behalf of the Catholic Charities and Catholic Bishops, making similar points. Subsequent hearings included large numbers of administrators from Catholic, Lutheran, and other religiously affiliated welfare agencies (Administration's Welfare Proposals 1977, Parts 3-6). Most all religious witnesses argued that government welfare programs are necessary for the abatement of poverty, both in direct cash assistance and their contracts with religious charities. Similar hearings followed in 1979, which included testimony by mainline and Catholic lobbyists (Welfare Reform Legislation 1979). The Carter administration, then, was an era where Catholic, mainline and interfaith advocates for the poor worked together relatively well and were accepted as experts by the administration and Congress members, primarily because of their focus on the ways in which governmental efforts could alleviate the burden on charitable agencies.

The Catholic Church had always opposed any attempts at federal funding of contraception and was increasingly concerned as the 1960s came to a close about the impending liberalization of abortion laws. However, while evangelicals geared up for the mobilization of the Christian Right, the Catholic Church and the National Council of Churches were at the height of their co-operative involvement on poverty in the late 1960s and the early 1970s, when they tried to help pass Nixon's family assistance program as discussed in the Introduction.

By the time the White House Conference on Families in 1978 got underway, the Catholic Church was prioritizing abortion after the Roe v Wade decision; the conference nearly failed because of disagreements about coverage of the abortion issue (Chappell 2010). Religiously affiliated persons, including Catholic representatives, did testify at hearings for the planned conference on families in early 1978. Monsignor Francis Lalley of

the Catholic Conference and Presbyterian minister Eileen Lindner of the National Council of Churches focused their testimony on the importance of public policy to strengthen families by providing a safety net for unemployed parents. While both speakers stressed that those in single-parent families should not feel a sense of failure, the Catholic speaker did argue that the model of a two-parent family was superior.

The evangelical denominations became concerned about abortion primarily as a symptom of increasing secularization (Wilcox and Robinson 2011). The Christian Right developed into a decentralized but largely united movement which prioritized opposition to abortion, opposition to gay rights, and support for prayer in schools. While some on the Christian Right admitted that governmental programs were necessary, they tended to argue that building them was a low priority. Others, by contrast, argued that dependence on government programs made people less interested in working hard, developing charitable initiative in their congregations, and cultivating religious faith (Martin 1996). Meanwhile, the evangelical left fractured during the 1970s even as one of their own, Jimmy Carter, became President, largely over responses to cultural issues (Gassaway 2003; Swartz 2012).

Opposing Cultural Change: The Center and Right Diverge

The introduction discussed the mobilization of the Christian Right based on suspicion of the civil rights movement, the women's movement, the anti-war left and secularity. The section below explains how the Catholic hierarchy did not adopt this narrative, but it is worth noting that evangelical organizations and activists also expressed concerns about unrestrained free market capitalism. Scholars such as Dorrien (2010), Schafer (2012) and Worthen (2015) note that Henry disagreed with the notion, advocated by the magazine's financial backers, that politics dominated by corporate interests could mesh

with a Christ-centered evangelical politics. Henry and most other writers in *Christianity Today* did not advocate for either the contraction or the expansion of the welfare state; rather, they focused their economic writing on how Christians themselves could contribute to a just economy. The cautious and ambivalent support of evangelicals for welfare can be seen in the Southern Baptist Convention's 1972 resolution, which is more conservative than those of the Catholic and mainline hierarchies, but more progressive than later SBC resolutions; it called for welfare reform. There was significant debate in publications such as *Christianity Today*, edited for some time by Carl Henry, who leaned toward economic conservatism. While the Catholic hierarchy remained more progressive than most large evangelical organizations on poverty policy, the Southern Baptist Convention's only resolution on welfare (passed in 1972) called for continued social programs. It called for welfare reform because "the present welfare system is a tangle of bureaucratic regulations and often ineffective programs" but called for a system which "may adequately financially help the many people in need of: job training for those able to work and the maintenance of the dignity of those who are forced because they are very young, very old, very sick, or severely incapacitated to depend on welfare for their existence." The National Association of Evangelicals, by contrast, released a resolution supporting tax exempt status for their charities, noting that "it would be a tragedy if programs now conducted by Christian charities were taken over by welfare." While it is true that evangelical charities sought government contracts by this time, they primarily wished for the government to facilitate, but not participate, in their work for the poor. The backlash against welfare supported by many evangelical leaders along with conservative cultural positions, combined with conservative evangelical theology prioritizing personal salvation as a cure for poverty, can

explain why evangelical charitable organizations did not join their mainline and Catholic colleagues in supporting expanded welfare.

The Reagan Administration.

The inauguration of the Reagan administration marked the beginning of wholesale efforts to scale back the social safety net. In its first two years, it blocked most new progressive anti-poverty initiatives and cut budgets for existing social welfare programs. The welfare system which had been established during the New Deal and War on Poverty remained largely intact, though underfunded, but the groundwork was laid for the welfare reform legislation of the 1990s, and opportunities to increase comprehensive income support have remained few and far between ever since. Religious advocates continued their “prophetic lobbying”, arguing for the programs that they believed were ideal, and, indeed, seemed possible a short time ago, but in practice, they were required to develop strategies to merely defend and lightly reform the welfare system.

Mainline denominations, progressive evangelical groups such as Sojourners, and progressive Catholics increasingly devoted themselves to interfaith advocacy with a clear social justice message. Interfaith Action, which focused on lobbying of the legislative and executive branches, and Interfaith Impact, which focused on developing materials for educating the Christian faithful, were descended from the Food Policy networks of the 1970s. To be sure, the National Council of Churches and its individual denominations continued to advocate on their own; Reichley (1985) notes a “barrage of letters” to Congress sent by the NCC to the Reagan administration over welfare. But the rise of the religious right, the decline of the mainline Protestant and progressive evangelical movements, and internal disorganization of the NCC made interfaith advocacy a more reasonable strategy.

Such groups continued to expound on themes that mainline lobbyists had previously used. They argued, based on Christian principles, that the government has a duty to take care of the poor. They highlighted, using statistical evidence and specific anecdotes, that the situation of the poor was unconscionable. Finally, they argued that religious charities could not take the place of government, adding that religiously based programs would be among those cut in Republican budget proposals. This last point gained significant media attention from *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* during the most significant budget cuts in 1982 (Briggs 1981; Austin 1982; Hyer 1982). Religious advocates did, however, integrate all of these themes into an oft repeated quote “the budget is a moral document.” (Tipton 2007, 3`9). This statement, used at nearly every committee hearing testimony and publication, sought to motivate allies and shame opponents into seeing the connection between the complex world of social welfare funding and the Christian faith of each person.

Though one leader of Interfaith Impact was quoted in Tipton (2007) as arguing that lobbying for welfare programs during the Reagan administration was “a litany of unachievement”, Tipton argues based on interviews of lobbyists, media reports and publications released by interfaith coalitions training local activists and providing economic statistics, that the mainline denominations and other religious progressives put forth a significant effort to protect the safety net. Jay Lintner, a lobbyist for the United Church of Christ, describes how the threats to social programs and complete disinterest in mainline lobbying by the Reagan administration caused religious progressives to be just as motivated as the open access and nuanced welfare discussions granted by the Carter administration. The summary below of committee hearing testimony provides some evidence for this claim.

Tipton (2007) describes how Interfaith action, in particular, became respected for their expertise on narrowly defined policy goals.

Meanwhile, the Catholic Bishops and Catholic Charities, while working within interfaith advocacy circles, maintained a vigorous independent lobbying effort, also focusing on narrowly defined policy areas such as social security cost of living increases (e.g. (Impact of Administration's Social Security Proposals 1981), the availability of the food stamp program, and hospital administration (Reese 1992). When religious testimony at committee hearings gained media attention, it was usually that of the Catholic bishops. For example, Bishop Joseph Sullivan, the Catholic Bishops liaison to Catholic Charities, testified at a House Budget Committee hearing in 1982 which received media coverage for his defense of the food stamp program (Impact of Omnibus Reconciliation 1982).

However, mainline lobbyists were also frequent committee hearing witnesses. Kenyon Burke of NCC and other mainline lobbyists testified on a committee hearing investigating general budget cuts (Administration's FI 1983 1982). Also in 1982, Ralph Watkins, a lobbyist for the small Anabaptist denomination the Church of the Brethren (an NCC member), testified on behalf of the newly founded group Interfaith Action in a hearing on the food stamp program (Reauthorization of the Food Stamp Program 1982). A representative for Interfaith Action also testified at a congressional hearing in 1984 to oppose a proposal which would have turned food stamps into block grant programs for states that wished to administer them (Food Stamp Optional Block Grant Program 1984).

Following the release of the Catholic Bishops' letter on arms control in 1983, the US Catholic Conference focused their full attention on economic matters. They held conferences on poverty policy and released drafts of their *Economic Justice for All*

document from 1983 to 1985 before the final version was approved in 1986. These efforts gained media attention (e.g. Williams 1983; Goldman 1986). While Catholic bishops held local hearings and sought to mobilize a broad cross-section of Catholic lay opinion and academic expertise in the development of the pastoral letter, as detailed in the trio of books released on the Catholic Bishops in the following decade, the primary goal of the letters was to state the Bishops' public policy objectives, rather than to mobilize Catholic action at the parish level (Berryman 1989; Burns 1991; Reese 1992). They also sought, though not entirely successfully, to establish consensus by repeatedly hearing presentations from both progressive and conservative critics.

During the middle of the Reagan administration, a new round of congressional hearings with religious witnesses took place. As claimed by Tipton's interviewees, mainline lobbyists renewed their efforts to discuss anti-poverty proposals with members of Congress, supposedly motivating a new round of congressional hearings on poverty during Reagan's second term. Sources on Catholic politics indicate that *Economic Justice for All* was most responsible for motivating renewed congressional interest in religious advocacy. On balance, the evidence leans toward Catholic lobbying as more substantial, but mainline advocates often testified alongside or occasionally instead of Catholic bishops.¹¹ Mainline and Catholic lobbyists were united in continuing to oppose budget cuts to food stamps,

¹¹ . Testimony at welfare-related subcommittees of both houses of Congress included representatives of the Catholic Bishops and the Lutheran Council (Welfare Reform 1987; Welfare: Reform or Replacement 1987). Continued hearings later in 1987 before the Senate Finance Committee featured Arthur Keys of the United Church of Christ, Director of Interfaith Action, who noted the support of the Catholic bishops (Welfare Reform Part 2 1987). On October 29, 1987, Father J. Brian Heher, Secretary of the Department of Social development and World Peace of the United States Catholic Conference, testified before the House Subcommittee on Labor Standards, Committee on Education and Labor. This hearing also included testimony from Archie Lehmon, on behalf of Interfaith Action for Economic Justice. Lehmon was also on the Home Mission Board of the Progressive National Baptist Convention, a black Protestant NCC denomination which was co-founded by Martin Luther King. The content of both of these testimonies is discussed in Chapter 5 (Fair Standards Act 1987).

welfare, social security programs and a wide variety of other programs to the poor, and advocating for increased social spending as they provided evidence for increasing rates of poverty. Many hearings included Catholic witnesses without Protestant representatives.¹² In welfare reform debates which led to the passage of the Family Support Act in 1988, the Catholic Bishops' document influenced a bipartisan consensus on encouraging job training and avoiding drastic cuts to programs.

The Catholic Bishops also appeared to be more influential regarding the minimum wage in the late 1980s. In 1987, shortly after the release of the pastoral letter *Economic Justice for All*, Los Angeles Archbishop Roger Mahoney was among the featured speakers at a rally with Senator Ted Kennedy in favor of increasing the Minimum Wage. The Catholic Bishops and mainline Protestant denominations had been instrumental in supporting the social activities of the United Farm Workers and other labor unions advocating for living wages for farm workers. However, the Los Angeles rally in 1987 is the first example of religious groups using social protest tactics to advocate specifically for a comprehensive minimum wage. The refusal of the Reagan administration to allow a minimum wage increase resulted in Mahoney stepping forward to confront this issue (Weinstein 1987). In 1989, the United States Catholic Conference sent letters to Congress advocating an increase in the Minimum Wage (Reese 1992). Senator Kent Conrad cited the Bishops' document *Economic Justice for All* in defense of the minimum wage, which itself had been inspired by Pope John Paul II's encyclical *Laborem Exercens*. Having demonstrated the Bishops' interest in lobbying to support their document, it is worth

¹² Work, Education and Training of Welfare Recipients (1986) featured Catholic Archbishop Edward O'Meara of Indianapolis, while hearings on homelessness and the need for public housing featured Edwin Conway of Catholic Charities Chicago (Urgent Relief of the Homeless 1987).

discussing the extent to which the statements on economic justice and health care presented a uniquely Catholic vision. *Economic Justice for All* underplayed the denomination's usual concerns about the decline of the traditional family and culture of life. *Economic Justice for All* argued that the Church's social principles mandate specific policies such as higher minimum wages and progressive welfare programs. The Bishops stress that most people should be able to get out of poverty through work; thus, it stresses jobs programs and just wage regulations as the most critical steps the government can take. Paragraph 69 argues that theological concepts of justice demand that workers must be paid fair wages. Paragraph 76 notes that social problems mentioned in previous paragraphs (including low wages) must be addressed collaboratively by business, labor and government, as instructed in Catholic social teaching since *Rerum Novarum*. In Paragraph 197, however, the Bishops directly endorse congressional intervention to increase the Minimum Wage in order to adjust for inflation.

Economic Justice for All discusses suggestions for cultivating self-improvement among the poor, especially through local programs operated by both governmental agencies and churches. However, it also advocates comprehensive welfare programs for all those who cannot find a job or should not be working for some other reason, especially illness or staying home with children (Paragraphs 208-214). The Bishops suggest standardizing eligibility standards rather than leaving them to the states, indexing support to cost of living and basic needs, establishing more focused initiatives to incentivize work by allowing people to receive some benefits while working at low-paying jobs, and allowing two-parent families to qualify. The Bishops expressed similar positions in their 1995 document *Principles and Priorities for Welfare Reform* and their 1996 document *A Catholic*

Framework for Economic Life, which critiqued welfare reform agendas. The Bishops advocate for a conservative model of the family, and, as will be discussed particularly in the next chapter, their advocacy of marriage and the two-parent family and opposition to abortion propels, rather than diminishes, their interest in progressive economic policies. As during the FAP debates over a decade earlier, the Bishops argue that, while family breakdown is a cause of poverty, poverty may also be a cause of family breakdown because of the stress it causes on marriages.

The Bishops' rhetoric on rights and needs is particularly present in their advocacy of health care reform which increased for a time after the election of Reagan, despite their acknowledgement of intervening issues such as concerns about the right to life and high costs. *Health and Health Care* (1981) expresses reservations about the dangers of a government monopoly and notes that high costs and rationing are concerns. However, the passage just before the conclusion states unequivocally that "we call for the development of a national health insurance program. It is the responsibility of the federal government to establish a comprehensive health care system that will ensure a basic level of health care for all Americans. The federal government should also ensure adequate funding for this basic level of care through a national health insurance program." The Catholic Bishops, then, are clearly as progressive as mainline Protestant denominations in their goals for health care. While the Catholic Bishops' 1981 document *Health and Health Care* states that Catholic healthcare providers must operate based on Catholic principles, including life from conception to natural death, and stated that a national healthcare system must include "basic human values" and respect for "conscience", it does not discuss abortion as a specific concern in drafting a comprehensive healthcare system, in the way that later documents have

focused at much greater length on abortion. This may be partially explained by the relatively recent passage of the Hyde Amendment, which prohibited taxpayer funding of abortions. Reese (1992), in his study of the Conference of Catholic Bishops, did document that there were already tensions between the pro-life and social development offices over health care legislation. For example, the Catholic Bishops only lobbied on behalf of the Family and Medical Leave Act if the bill was changed to prevent family leave for the obtaining of an abortion. The USCCB's 1981 letter Health and Health Care argues that private institutions cannot take care of all healthcare funding needs, and that government must be involved, but also advocates "pluralism"; "in accord with the traditional Catholic principle of subsidiarity, we believe voluntary institutions must continue to play an essential role in our society." The principle of subsidiarity, as articulated in Pope Pius XI's 1931 encyclical *Quadregesimo Anno*, is a warning against overcentralization, arguing that when possible, individuals, the private sector or government below the federal level should handle problems. Though *Quadregesimo Anno* does not mention health care, some Catholic theologians, ethicists and commentators have used subsidiarity in the context of health care (McDonough 2007). The Catholic Bishops in the United States, however, clearly advocate that the federal government does need to be involved in health care, but they are wary of a system entirely controlled by the federal government. Subsidiarity does, however, give them a theological reason to argue for checks on government power, whether in favor of Catholic health associations or in more general terms supporting the private sector or conscience protections regarding abortion. On the other hand, conservative Catholics could argue that the federal government's contraception mandates demonstrate that a centralized health care system in a secular nation will never operate under the principles of Catholic theology. Fiscal and social

conservatism, then, can be linked. Overall, however, the moderate rhetoric of the Catholic Bishops strikes a balance between the more government-centered focus of most mainline resolutions and the approach centered on the private sector in evangelical resolutions.

The Right Wing Free Market Assault on Social Justice Theology

Of course, the Christian Right and its secular allies did not think the Catholic Bishops paid nearly enough attention to the principle of subsidiarity, and disdained mainline Protestant denominational leaderships for their faith in governmental solutions. Right-wing think tanks such as the Institute on Religion and Democracy, the Heritage Foundation, the American Enterprise Institute, and later the Acton Institute have applied pressure on the Catholic Church and the National Council of Churches since the 1980s. The beginning of these initiatives came at a difficult financial and ministerial stage for the mainline denominations. The think tanks were particularly critical of progressive and Catholic attitudes to foreign policy, and sowed discord between religious groups and labor unions, weakening anti-poverty efforts (Tipton 2007). IR recruited theologically and politically conservative members of the United Methodist Church and other mainline denominations, and established networks linking them with members who were more liberal on economic and labor issues but opposed the NCC's support of the Nicaraguan Sandinistas and other left-wing international movements. Meanwhile, the American Enterprise Institute and Heritage Foundation, drawing more significantly from the religious right movement centered in evangelicalism while adding representatives from conservative Catholic and mainline organizations, also critiqued denominations' progressive economic views. They recruited members of a variety of denominations to use interpretations from their own denominations' older documents; in particular, the Catholic Church's principle of

subsidiarity which had been articulated by Pope Pius XI in 1931 to warn against over-regulation by the state. This indicated to politicians and Catholics and mainliners interested in politics that there were competing theological and political interpretations. Michael Novak, a former left-wing journalist who joined AEI, and William Simon, the Reagan administration's treasury secretary, were part of a lay commission of conservative Catholics which closely watched the drafting of *Economic Justice for All*, testified at hearings, and wrote its own letter in response to an early draft, gaining media and academic attention (Berryman 1989). The letter argued, based on Novak's 1983 book *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*, that progressive programs not only weaken incentives for the poor to pursue hard work, but also prevent businesses from pursuing innovation and hiring based on market conditions, which are necessary for the maintenance of healthy Catholic communities.

Thus, right-wing opposition to the moral visions of the Catholic and mainline hierarchy was related to disagreements about economic principles. The Catholic Bishops were arguably not as weakened politically as compared to mainline Protestants. Mainline denominations, faced with declining numbers and political divisions, cut funding to the National Council of Churches (Dunn 1989), while the Bishops continued with the publication of their economics document and received attention for it from the media and Congress. But the Bishops' conservative views on abortion, did not shield them from critiques by religious conservatives on economic grounds. Because economics was not a matter of doctrine, membership groups within denominations successfully undermined hierarchical efforts for a moral vision. On the other hand, charitable institutions did their best to aid the Catholic hierarchy in its views on poverty, and they, along with Protestant colleagues, had largely done so since the New Deal, at least on the issue of welfare.

For example, in a 1982 poll cited by Reichley (1985), evangelicals were nearly split on the question of increased spending, while black Protestants backed increases by a vast majority, Catholics were in favor with 56%, and mainline Protestants were opposed 59-39. A 1988 Gallup poll cited by Schafer (2012) found that 52% of Americans favored spending increases. Evangelicals were slightly more likely to be in favor (54%), Catholics even more likely than evangelicals, and mainline Protestants least likely.

With little consensus among or within denominations, progressive religious denominations did the best they could with the grassroots activist organizations, allied think tanks, and charitable agencies. As the next three chapters show, the 1990s and 2000s showed little promise for hopes of comprehensive approaches to poverty. Democratic administrations did pursue health care reform, and it was passed within the first half of President Obama's first term when the Democratic Party's power in Congress was at a high point. There were also increases in the Earned Income Tax Credit, and advances in specific smaller programs. But welfare was severely cut during the Clinton administration, and the reform was not reversed under the Obama administration; meanwhile, the federal minimum wage has been increased only twice since 1989. In adapting to this reality, religious charitable agencies have proved to be the most durable actors in lobbying the federal government and mobilizing local advocacy for the living wage. Of course, as this chapter has shown, such work by charities is far from new. Charities which do not have some sort of theological argument in favor of comprehensive justice for the poor are less likely to be involved in these efforts.

Chapter 3: Health Care Reform

Health care is a complex policy issue which has an impact on all economic classes. For the poor, however, suffering health crises without good insurance coverage can result in exacerbating illness and or financial catastrophe. As discussed in chapter 2, religious groups have become a significant part of the debate on health care reform regarding both ethical dimensions and the practical politics of hospital administration. This chapter will analyze religious action on health care reform since the early 1990s, with a focus on President Clinton's unsuccessful attempt to pass the Health Security Act in 1993, and President Obama's successful attempt to pass the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act in 2010. It will begin by examining legislative history with a focus on these two contentious battles, discussing partisan polarization and interest group behavior, and then discussing public opinion data to explain why denominations find it difficult to mobilize membership on behalf of their positions. The chapter will continue with sections on the Health Security Act, a brief discussion of the period between 1994 and 2008, and a lengthy study of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, concluding with an analysis of the extent to which concerns about abortion were significant in the voting decisions of moderate Democrats. It will show how conservative evangelicals used religion to argue against health care reform for a broad range of reasons, how Catholic theological prioritization of abortion is more important in the negative attitude of the Bishops toward health care reform in 2010 than any other factors, how organizational weakness limited the efforts of mainline Protestants and other progressive religious groups to develop an effective lobbying voice opposed to the Catholic Church's negative position on health care in 2009 and 2010, and how the Catholic Health Association's significant presence in the health care field served as an incentive for it

to seek reform in order to address crises in health management, while also giving it the most significant lobbying voice amongst religious groups. Books and media accounts provide evidence that religious progressives have had significant access to the President and the rest of the executive branch regarding health care, especially during the health care reform efforts of Presidents Clinton and Obama. In efforts at religious outreach common to the opening years of Democratic administrations, the White House in both 1993 and 2009 sought support from progressive religious denominational associations such as the National Council of Churches, but there is little evidence that the President took their recommendations into account. The Catholic Health Association, by contrast, was able to influence presidential approaches because they were able to bolster their moral recommendations with their significant expertise in health care. Religious groups involved in health care reform also lobbied members of Congress, especially moderate Democrats. Most religious groups engage in some grassroots lobbying in order to mobilize their lobbying of Congress. Conservative religious groups achieve more influence through grassroots activism, primarily in conjunction with other conservative activists.

Legislative History: Piecemeal Health Care Safety Net, a Complex Universe of Interest Groups, and Increasing Partisan Polarization

There are many books documenting the legislative history of health care policy, including Broder and Blumenthal (1997), Altman (2010), McDonough (2011), Skochpol and Jacobs (2012), and Morone and Blumenthal (2009). The listed books document that in the 1930s, President Roosevelt advocated universal health care as part of the New Deal, but failed to get it through Congress. After World War II, President Truman had even more interest in health reform, but continued to face opposition from southern Democrats and

conservative Republicans. In 1946 he was able to persuade Congress to pass the Hill-Burton Act, a federal program for hospital construction which was later expanded to provide other federal funding for hospitals.

The following 60 years included several failed attempts at comprehensive reform, and a variety of “piecemeal” reforms (Altman 2010). After the victory of the Democrats in the presidential and congressional elections in 1964, President Johnson was able to shepherd Medicare and Medicaid through Congress in 1965 as amendments to the Social Security Act, despite the opposition of the American Medical Association. Though the majority of Republicans were opposed to Medicare, which provided care to elderly citizens, partisan polarization was much less acute than it would become by the time President Obama’s health care reform efforts took place over 40 years later. Conservative Democrats, especially from the South, including powerful committee chairmen such as Representative Wilbur Mills and Senator Russell Long, were ambivalent about Medicare because of its high cost and provision for increased federal powers. Long, in particular, supported an alternative which would provide national insurance only for catastrophic cases. Republicans such as Representative John Burns and Senator Jacob Javits contributed ideas to Medicare. Burns’s ideas, which gave more power to state-run voluntary insurance programs, were included in Medicare. This contrasts with failed efforts by Clinton and Obama to negotiate with Republicans. When the bill amending the Social Security Act came to the House floor, 59 Democrats voted against it and 65 Republicans voted for it. When Republicans were able to get a vote on substituting the bill for the Burns plan, ten Republicans voted against it, supporting the Administration and compensating for dozens of Democratic defectors (Zelizer 2015).

President Nixon was more supportive of the idea of a national health care system than most Republicans, arguably because of his own family's medical tragedies during his childhood (Morone and Blumenthal 2002). Ted Kennedy, Wilbur Mills and Richard Nixon attempted to negotiate a compromise. The story of these efforts includes a religious angle, as an Episcopal priest agreed to provide the basement of his church as a secret meeting place for their aides (Altman 2010). Kennedy was harshly criticized by labor unions for his abandonment of his original, more progressive proposal. Nixon's plan would have included employer mandates, with insurance options for low income and unemployed, and has often been compared to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010. During the Nixon administration, only a proposal creating Health Management Organizations (HMOs) was enacted. Because of Watergate and a scandal which weakened Mills's power in 1974, the proposal never came to a vote. Republican Presidents after Nixon were not interested in the issue of comprehensive health care reform (Altman 2010). In the late 1970s, President Carter was unable to craft a comprehensive health plan. In 1988, near the end of the Reagan administration, Congress was able to pass a catastrophic health insurance bill, but it was repealed the following year because of public pressure, when it was alleged that individuals would have less control over their care.

Bill Clinton's 1992 campaign featured health care reform significantly. The plan drawn up by his administration called for managed competition among health insurance programs, regulated by the federal government. The resulting proposal, known as the Health Security Act, was opposed by many interest groups across the political spectrum, particularly small and medium insurance companies and the American Medical Association (Broder and Blumenthal 1997). When it became clear that congressional Democrats were

unsatisfied, the proposal was dropped before the 1994 elections, without any congressional votes.

Clinton then advocated a continuation of incremental policies. The debate about health care was often placed in the context of other battles over the federal budget, which had been discussed in the previous chapter on welfare reform. The Children's Health Insurance Program was passed in 1997. During the administration of George W. Bush, after long negotiations, Medicare prescription drug programs were passed. However, the crisis in health care continued to grow, as documented by all of the books mentioned previously, along with others including Morone and Jacobs (2004) and Hacker (2008). Hacker documents that 47 million Americans were uninsured by 2007, that the number of uninsured had been increasing since the 1980s (even with somewhat successful efforts to provide insurance for children), and even many of those who had insurance faced growing medical costs. Additionally, hospitals and medical facilities faced the high cost of stabilizing patients without insurance, who then faced the prospect of continued recovery with no coverage. These are only the most obvious of a long list of problems in the health care industry, which appear to have finally incentivized interest groups on the business side of health care policy to enter more serious discussions on health care reform.

Unlike Clinton, Obama involved congressional leaders in every step of the health care reform process. He also involved interest groups, including the hospital industry, the pharmaceutical industry, insurance companies, device manufacturers, labor unions, and the American Medical Association. The open invitation for interest group input was an opportunity for religious groups, especially the Catholic Health Association, which also operates as a trade group. If the Catholic Health Association had no connection to its

religious heritage, it still would have been a key player in the health care process because of the large number of hospitals. However, because it had the potential to serve as a pro-reform voice in both the medical and religious fields, the Obama administration particularly coveted its support.

One of the most surprisingly significant issues in this legislative process was abortion. Some moderate Democrats and most Republicans were opposed to any federal funding of abortions, under the precedent of the 1976 Hyde amendment. When the House bill came up for a vote in November 2009, Brad Ellsworth, a Catholic, pro-life Democrat, introduced a compromise where funds for abortion included in insurance plans would be segregated, so no federal money would be funding them. After pressure from pro-life groups, Pelosi was forced to drop that compromise and allow a vote on an amendment by Democrat Bart Stupak, which would have prohibited insurance plans receiving government subsidies to cover abortion. Republicans likely could have derailed health care reform by voting against the Stupak amendment, but they risked facing backlash from pro-life groups. All Republicans and 64 Democrats voted for the Stupak amendment, which passed. 39 Democrats voted against the House bill and one Republican voted in favor. After pressure from pro-choice Senate Democrats and negotiation with pro-life Democratic senators, the Senate adopted a bill with language similar to the Ellsworth compromise on Christmas Eve. In March 2010, 34 House Democrats voted against the Senate version of the bill, with no Republicans voting in favor. In the Senate, there was concern that 60 votes would be needed because the Republicans could organize a filibuster after the special election of Scott Brown, but Senate Majority leader Harry Reid was able to use the parliamentary tactic of reconciliation, by which budget votes could bypass filibusters with only 51 votes. This

process became possible after the Senate parliamentarian ruled that health care reform could qualify as a budgetary bill. The Senate approved the final version of the bill with all Democrats voting in favor. It was signed by President Obama on March 22, 2010. This legislative battle involved little to no collaboration between Democrats and Republicans, and significant conflict between Democrats over health care policy, even aside from the issue of abortion. Since the Republicans took over the House of Representatives in the 2010 elections, further progressive reform of health care has not been on the political agenda, as Democrats have had to fight in the state governments and in the courts to make sure that the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act is allowed to be enacted.

Public Opinion

Although specific proposals for nationalized health care often become unpopular, the idea of universal, guaranteed health care was supported by a majority of Americans of all religious backgrounds at the time of the 1988 election (Gallup and Costelli 1989) and before the 2010 health care reform legislation; 63% according to data cited in Pew's 2007 Religious Landscape survey. While not as popular as minimum wage increases (see previous chapter), health care has long been perceived by Democrats to be an issue that demands action, and they can use polling data as talking points. Even among conservative Republicans, support for universal health care was, as of 2007, held by a significant minority; 38% as of 2007.

According to the 2007 Pew Religious Landscape Survey, Majorities of all religious groups support universal health care, even if it requires tax increases, at rates above 50% and below 80%. White evangelicals are least supportive, at 53%. Somewhat surprisingly, white mainline Protestants are only slightly more likely to be supportive, at 58%, even though

mainline denominations are very much more likely than evangelical denominations to support and lobby on behalf of health care reform. This finding is evidence for the contention that there is a political gap between denominational leaders and laity within most mainline denominations, as a large minority of mainline Protestants remains quite politically conservative, and their form of conservatism is economic as well as cultural. On the other hand, mainline Protestants appear to be more supportive of universal health care as compared to welfare. About 2/3 of black Protestants (66%), Catholics (67%), and the nonaffiliated (68%) supported universal health care. The rate of support among black Protestants and the unaffiliated is somewhat lower than expected, given their relative liberalism and support for the Democratic Party. There was a racial gap among Catholics, with 62% of white Catholics supporting universal health care, compared to 77% of Hispanic Catholics. Again, health care was more popular than welfare among Catholics. This correlates with the higher likelihood of white Catholics to vote for the Republican Party. Thus, when controlling for race, and based on the fact that most mainline Protestants are white, it appears that white Catholics and white mainline Protestants are about equally supportive of health care reform. The numbers are such that Catholic bishops and mainline Protestant denominational leaders can expect to receive significant support, but also significant opposition from a minority of their members, when lobbying for health care reform.

However, when health care reform becomes a salient issue, the policy details of health care reform obscure attempts to analyze the data provided in the Pew survey. As Catholics focus on the abortion issue, and members of all religious groups, but especially

evangelicals, become dissatisfied with particular reform efforts, the likelihood of churches lobbying for health reform because of support from their members becomes lower.

It is helpful to try to determine how much opposition to health care reform among Christians is related to the possibility that abortion coverage may be included. A good starting point is to examine the 2007 Pew Survey data on abortion. Catholics and black Protestants were roughly divided in their attitudes toward the legality of abortion. Only a quarter of white mainline Protestants were against abortion in most or all cases, though half favored legality in most, but not all cases. Over 60% of evangelicals were opposed to legal abortion in most or all cases.

A 2009 Gallup poll, taken just before the beginning of the debate over the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, agreed with Pew data indicating that Catholics were almost equally divided regarding their beliefs about the legality of abortion. Both Pew and Gallup noted that there was a particularly distinct gap in the attitudes of white Catholics based on their frequency of church attendance. In the Pew Survey, 58% of white Catholics who attended mass at least once a week opposed legal abortion, nearing the levels of pro-life belief among white evangelicals. Hispanic Catholics, by contrast, had higher levels of church attendance even while supporting legal abortion.

A Pew poll (2009) poll, conducted when the issue of abortion in health care policy became particularly salient, found that abortion was listed by less than 10% of health care reform opponents as their main reason for opposing the bill, though over half, including over three quarters of white evangelical and white Catholic opponents, listed opposition to abortion coverage as one reason. Economic concerns, such as concerns about declining quality and rising cost, and opposition to health care coverage for immigrants, were much

more important. Overall, this poll indicates that economic concerns are particularly important for mainline Protestant opponents, but also for opponents across the religious spectrum, including Catholics and evangelicals whose denominations are strongly opposed to abortion coverage. As will be discussed later in this chapter, evangelical organizations are as opposed to health care for economic reasons as they are because of abortion. For Catholics, however, those who follow the line of the Bishops should, if they oppose reform, list abortion as their primary reason. Later polling analyzed by Boorstein (2010) indicated that there was little movement among Catholics in their attitudes about health care reform after the Bishops came out against it due to the issue of abortion. Partisan identity was the best predictor of Catholics' attitude to reform, both at the beginning of the process and near the time of the bill's passage. It would appear, then, that the Catholic Bishops' position of opposing health care reform only without abortion coverage, has little public support, and may well be held only among an elite group of Catholic and other Christian activists. It also indicates that, while majorities of Americans support the idea of universal health care, there is less support when a legislative plan is released, and the primary concerns are not related to cultural issues.

Regrettably, polling data regarding Catholic support for the Bishops' position against health care reform in early 2010 is not available. Data on attitudes regarding the legality of abortion does not answer this question. Some pro-life Catholics may have taken the Catholic Health Association's position of supporting the law despite their beliefs about abortion, while some pro-choice Catholics may oppose any indication of taxpayer funding for abortion. A Zogby poll from 2008, often cited by pro-life advocates, indicates that 69% of Americans oppose taxpayer funding of abortions, but does not divide the sample by religion.

It is unlikely, however, that Catholics were more supportive of taxpayer funding of abortions than other groups. There is much polling data from the following years regarding attitudes about contraception mandates, which may provide some indication as to the level of support for the Bishops' health care policy. Since contraception is much more accepted by most Americans, including Catholics, than abortion, despite the position of the Catholic Church and some evangelical denominations against contraception, it would be expected that taxpayer funding of abortion would be even less popular than contraception mandates. 38% of evangelicals, 61% of the religiously unaffiliated, and roughly half of Catholics and mainline Protestants were in support of employer mandates to provide contraception. Exemptions for religious institutions were even more popular.

Meanwhile, the Public Religion Research Institute provided updated data in 2014 regarding religious attitudes about health care in general. 62% of Catholics still supported the principle of national guaranteed health insurance, while roughly 40% of white mainline and evangelical Protestants supported such a principle. Half of Catholics, 33% of mainline Protestants and 16% of white evangelicals favored the current health care reform law. A decline in support of universal health care among evangelicals is particularly noticeable. Race and party, however, were still more significant than religion, with minorities regardless of religion being in favor of current health care reform efforts by large majorities. Thus, white Catholics are likely in favor of universal health care and current health care law at roughly equal numbers compared to white mainline Protestants.

As noted in many contemporary works on American religion, this public opinion data indicates that evangelicals support the Catholic bishops on the issues of abortion and contraception mandates in higher numbers than Catholics themselves. However, mainline

Protestants are also divided, leaning toward opposition, regarding universal health care, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, and contraception mandates, even though their denominations do not oppose any of these ideas and even though they are not opposed to legal abortion in high numbers. Mainline Protestant critics of health care reform, then, appear to have primarily secular reasons for their opposition. Catholic organizations are gaining sympathy from many rank and file Catholics regarding issues of conscience, but not overwhelming support, and there is no evidence that these issues alone are changing minds on health care reform in general, although support for reform among all groups has gone down. While Catholic bishops do have a constituency for their brand of socially conservative, fiscally progressive politics, especially among politically moderate devout churchgoers, it appears that they, along with many evangelicals, also have more political reasons for their opposition to health care in addition or instead of religious principles or the instruction of their religious leaders. Meanwhile, while there are pressure groups within the Church advocating for health care reform, the Bishops are likely to listen to them only if they are strongly anti-abortion, since it is their theological priority. Meanwhile, pro-life pressure groups, such as the USCCB's own pro-life office, the American Life League, the National Right to Life Committee, and primarily online communities such as the National Catholic Register, Catholic Online and Catholic Vote, mobilize devout churchgoers, encouraging the Bishops' policy on the centrality of abortion in health care reform.

The opinion of clergy on health care policy is an instructive comparison along with the mass public and denominational leadership. The book *Pulpit and Politics*, edited by Corwin Smidt (2004), is a comparative survey of clergy of over a dozen denominations,

which includes a question on their survey about support for national health insurance. The following table summarizes results.

| Denomination | Tradition | % |
|------------------------------------|------------------|----------|
| African Methodist Episcopal Church | Black Protestant | 88 |
| Church of God in Christ | Black Protestant | 83 |
| Disciples of Christ | Mainline | 70 |
| Evangelical Lutheran | Mainline | 70 |
| United Methodist | Mainline | 62 |
| Presbyterian Church USA | Mainline | 59 |
| Roman Catholic | Roman Catholic | 59 |
| Christian Reformed Church | Evangelical | 41 |
| Southern Baptist | Evangelical | 40 |
| Assemblies of God | Evangelical | 32 |
| Church of the Nazarene | Evangelical | 24 |
| Lutheran Church Missouri Synod | Evangelical | 20 |
| Evangelical Free Church | Evangelical | 16 |
| Presbyterian Church in America | Evangelical | 10 |

Table 1: Percentage of Clergy Supporting National Health Care

While low response rates in some denominations mean that data from this study should not be taken as conclusive, the authors usually indicated whether there had been changing results compared to previous studies. Large majorities of those surveyed in most of the mainline denominations in the study supported national insurance (70% among Disciples of Christ and Evangelical Lutheran Church in America pastors, 62% among United Methodist pastors, and 59% among Presbyterian Church USA pastors). This indicates slightly higher support of health care reform among clergy than among lay mainline Protestants. Support for health care reform was higher than support for the Democratic Party and presidential candidate Al Gore in the 2000 presidential elections; generally by only a few percentage points, but among United Methodist clergy, by over 15%. Overall, clergy among mainline Protestant denominations have a slight leaning toward support for the Democratic Party, theological liberalism and liberal positions on a variety of

political policies including cultural issues, with large conservative minorities in most of the denominations. Health care reform appears to be one of the progressive issues with strongest support among mainline denominations, but not universal support. The survey also studied some large evangelical denominations. Minorities in each supported national health insurance. Among those denominations outside of the National Association of Evangelicals, this included about 40% of Southern Baptist ministers, 20% of Lutheran Church Missouri Synod ministers, and 24% of Churches of Christ ministers. Among NAE denominations in the survey, which included most of the largest NAE denominations, only 10% of Presbyterian Church in America ministers supported national health insurance, along with 16% of Evangelical Free Church ministers, 24% of Church of the Nazarene ministers, 32% of Assemblies of God ministers, and 41% of Christian Reformed Church ministers. These denominations include representation from across the spectrum of evangelicalism, including Reformed and other fundamentalist churches, along with Wesleyan Holiness and Pentecostal denominations such as the Nazarenes and Assemblies of God. Roughly 2/3 of Roman Catholic priests were in support of universal health care, showing generally similar levels of support as mainline Protestant clergy. Finally, black Protestant ministers were most likely to support universal health care, as shown in studies of 2 of the 3 largest black denominations (88% for ministers in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and 83% of ministers in the Church of God in Christ, the most conservative black denomination). Over 80% of ministers in these denominations are also Democrats. Catholic priests and black Protestant ministers are likely to hold to theologically and culturally conservative positions. However, they disagree with evangelical Christians, who also hold theologically and socially conservative positions, on health care and other economic issues.

Support for national health insurance among Catholic priests, mainline ministers, and to a much lesser extent black Protestant ministers was higher than support for the Democratic Party and its presidential candidates, in organizations which are politically split or lean toward the Democratic Party. Somewhat similarly, support among evangelical ministers was also higher than support for the Democratic Party and its candidates, which was less than 10% in all of the evangelical denominations in the survey except the Southern Baptist Convention. This mirrors the higher level of support for universal health care compared to Democratic Party support among the general public. This indicates that some Republican ministers, many of whom are likely to be social conservatives, still acknowledge the need for health care reform, even if it is not a priority issue.

Overall, there is a correlation between theological orthodoxy, political conservatism and opposition to universal health care in public opinion and clergy, especially among mainline and evangelical Protestants. However, this correlation exists much less among Catholics and especially black Protestants. Even among mainline and evangelical Protestants, the correlation is not absolute, and there are evangelical denominations where support for universal health care remains a small minority as a position of absolute conservatism dominates.

Religious Activism on Health Care during the Clinton, Bush and Obama Administrations

Religious influence on health care necessarily involves significant effort at insider lobbying. A more substantive finding of this research, however, is that lobbying of Presidents and their administrations is as important to the success of religious organizations as lobbying of Congress. The politics of the executive branch and the bureaucracy is not an

easy environment for those lobbying through tactics of social justice. Tactics of moral persuasion may, for a moment, gain the President's attention. But religiously affiliated charitable agencies such as the Catholic Health Association were required to present their findings on the feasibility of health care plans, and persuade the Presidents that they had the ear of moderate congressional Democrats. To be sure, landmark health care legislation is a special case given that the Democratic presidents who opened their administrations with attempts at health reform sought to engage with religious lobbyists as much as possible, to gain support for such difficult and far-reaching anti-poverty legislation. Although progressive Catholics and mainline Protestants did not get the health plans they desired through Congress, their activism was noted in media and academic sources, although mainline Protestants were more influential during the Clinton administration while the Catholic Health Association was more influential in the Obama administration, despite persistent accusations that the Obama administration is anti-Catholic. The denominational affiliations of the Presidents themselves, however, are not significant, as President Clinton had poor relations with his own Southern Baptist Convention's increasingly conservative leadership, and President Obama, a member of the mainline United Church of Christ, had less extensive relations with the National Council of Churches. Religious progressives did certainly lobby Congress as well, especially the United Methodist Church and Catholic Health Association in 2009.

Religious groups in favor of reform also engaged in a moderate level of grassroots activity. The Catholic Health Association did not appear to engage in much grassroots activity regarding the interests of its hospitals in the legislation, but did engage in some grassroots activity in general support of reform. Most importantly, the significant influence

of the Catholic Health Association demonstrates that, particularly for the issue of health care reform, religious groups lobby most effectively when they demonstrate expertise in the practical administration of health care. The Catholic Health Association was able to present a nuanced view of ethical dimensions to Democratic administrations, provide valuable perspective on the practical politics of hospital administration to governmental agencies, members of Congress and secular hospital administrators, and provide an alternative view compared to that of the Catholic Bishops while still agreeing with the Bishops' concerns about abortion, which was helpful in gaining support for reform from some reluctant Democrats. As discussed in Chapter 2, the Catholic Health Association already had a history of consulting with Presidents and testifying at congressional hearings. However, the decline of Protestant health care interests and the increasing polarization over abortion increased the importance of Catholic health care lobbyists.

In each of the sections to follow on President Clinton's Health Security Act and President Obama's Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, I begin by examining the work of mainline Protestants to support comprehensive reforms. They experienced tension between advocating for reforms which were unlikely to be politically viable, and pragmatic pressures to work for the limited reforms on the table. The Catholic Health Association, meanwhile, sought to link support for social justice with a conviction that any reforms under consideration would be an improvement for the administration of Catholic hospitals. I then examine the actions of the Bishops to prevent abortion funding in health care, even as the Catholic Health Association took a stance of agreeing with the Bishops' pro-life position while pursuing their own legislative priorities. I then argue that conservative evangelicals,

while agreeing with an anti-abortion position, had many other reasons to oppose health care reform, which the Bishops did not share.

Background to the Health Security Act Debate

Tipton (2007) notes that denominational efforts by mainline Protestants to express concern over the high rate of uninsured Americans during the 1970s and 1980s involve more internal investigations than lobbying for legislation. In 1989, the Lutherans and Presbyterians led an effort to get mainline Washington offices involved. Meanwhile, former President Jimmy Carter, a progressive Southern Baptist whose religious faith encouraged him to pursue a failed attempt at health care reform during his presidency, gathered a group of religious leaders together to examine the issue of health care (Walsh 2000). In 1991, this broad interfaith coalition led by the National Council of Churches, known as the Interreligious Health Care Access Campaign developed “a fivefold strategy featuring (1) a broad campaign to educate the public at large; (2) direct advocacy to Congress, led by the Washington church offices; (3) grassroots education and advocacy within religious congregations; (4) coalition-building with nonreligious advocates and public-interest groups for health care reform; and (5) use of religious and public media to advance these ends (Tipton 2007, 320). The campaign endorsed a single payer health care system, and according to Tipton, lobbied members of Congress to support health care bills sponsored by Democrats. Early on, IHCAC was open to a variety of proposals including employer mandates, tax credits and national insurance (Cornell 1992A). Even by 1993, IHCAC was very pleased “that Clinton “has embraced the goal of universal access to health care as the core of health care reform.” However, Walsh states that President Jimmy Carter distanced himself from IHCAC because of its insistence on single payer. Most of the mainline

denominations also passed resolutions endorsing universal health care in 1991, some of which were discussed earlier in this chapter. IHCAC supporters also wrote letters to Bill Clinton upon his election in 1992, advocating publicly financed health care reform as opposed to employer mandates.

Mainline Churches and their Allies: From Broad Support to Discord among Progressives (1993-1994)

Accounts of Clinton's health care reform effort such as Broder and Blumenthal (1997) do not mention the involvement of religious groups in support of reform. However, books focusing on religious organizations such as Walsh (2000) and Tipton (2007), secular media sources (especially *The Washington Post*), and religious media sources such as the *National Catholic Reporter* and *The Christian Century*, provide evidence that religious organizations had considerable involvement. A group calling itself the Single Payer Coalition, including Network Catholic Social Justice Lobby and the mainline group Church Women United, met with the Clinton transition team three times, as it became clear that health care reform would become a priority of the Clinton administration. However, IHCAC and the National Council of Churches clearly distinguished themselves as the primary religious coalitions supporting reform efforts. They met with Clinton's policy advisors several times (Walsh 2000). According to Tipton (page 321), the IHCAC "conducted press conferences and other public-relations activities. It backed a wide range of public advocacy and educational activities culminating in two national "lobby days" on Capitol Hill in May of 1993 and June of 1994."

Church groups held hearings which were attended by White House Health Care task force members. The White House considered the IHCAC, mainline churches, Quakers and

other religious progressives significant enough that they sought to reassure such groups when plans drifted away from single payer (Tipton 322). When Clinton released his plan involving “managed competition” in late September 1993, the Catholic Health Association and National Council of Churches general secretary Joan Campbell reacted most positively (*The Christian Century*, 10/6/1993). However, Church Women United, the United Church of Christ and the United Methodist General Board of Church and Society expressed opposition to managed competition, and Anderson (1993) noted that they were already beginning to lobby for more progressive legislation.

While the NCC’s Joan Brown Campbell was perceived as being favorable to Clinton, she was quoted in *The Washington Post* as saying that reforms were not as extensive as religious groups would like. The National Council of Churches wrote a letter to the Clinton administration in November 1993, applauding the attempt at health care reform while stating that progressive religious organizations retained the right to criticize specific plans (Walsh 2000). In the spring of 1994, National Council of Churches general secretary Joan Brown Campbell was contacted by the Clinton administration and agreed to speak on behalf of mainline churches in support of compromise proposals. However, Washington offices of some mainline denominations were critical of her leadership. They disagreed with attempts to take coverage of immigrants out of the proposal and cut guaranteed coverage that would have been given to more low income Americans in previous proposals (Tipton).

By the summer of 1994, the Clintons and some liberal journalists began scolding advocates of the more progressive reforms not included in Congress’s compromise plan introduced by Senator George Mitchell. Joe Klein, writing in *Newsweek* in support of the plan, specifically criticized “the religious left” as part of the progressive coalition he

critiqued. Religious groups, meanwhile, argued that the reform being proposed, primarily including employer mandates, was not strong enough to achieve grassroots support, while still provoking backlash from conservatives. Eventually, mainline churches came out against the proposal, while the African Methodist Episcopal Church supported it as a pragmatic first step. The IHCAC publicly released a letter submitted to every senator, attacking the bill on three specific issues; no universal coverage, no substantial benefit package, and no private sector cost controls. It advocated state-level single payer as a compromise. The night before a scheduled IHCAC press conference, Joan Brown Campbell came out in favor of the compromise after being called by the White House (Tipton).

While this account provides evidence of religious lobbying of Congress and grassroots activism, the primary narrative centers on the relationship between the Clinton administration and progressive religious activists in the leadership of key interest groups. Most importantly, Joan Brown Campbell, while attempting to lobby the Clinton administration and Congress for more progressive policies, was in turn lobbied by the Clinton administration to serve as a go-between, encouraging her supporters to work on behalf of compromise legislation. Most mainline lobbyists, however, focused more on sending a message about health inequality than getting compromise legislation passed. In what Hofrening (1995) calls “prophetic lobbying”, they advocate that government provide solutions to the problems of the health system and protect the poor, regardless of financial or political costs. Campbell argued that religious progressives did not adequately develop grassroots advocacy within denominations. It is clear that religious progressives, particularly Catholic associations, mainline Protestants and some black Protestant denominations, were involved in lobbying by releasing statements, conducting press conferences, and speaking

with administration officials and members of Congress. The IHCAC's early statements indicated much promise of grassroots activism. Yet as Hillary Clinton stated, the number of constituent letters and phone calls to Congress from conservatives vastly outnumbered those of progressives (Tipton 322). On the other hand, religious progressives were more interested in helping to create the plan, and less interested in selling a compromise plan, despite urging by NCC leadership. Prophetic lobbying is unlikely to work without either significant insider connections or grassroots social movements. Instead of a progressive mobilized movement, Christian conservatives and others in the right-wing were the ones better able to organize social movements on the issue of reform. It is possible that more grassroots campaigning within denominations for single payer health care in the very early stages of negotiation, and sustained throughout congressional debate, could have been helpful, but mainline denominations appeared not to have the political infrastructure, institutional access to legislative architects, and unity in messaging.

The Catholic Health Association: A Key Player

The Catholic Health Association and the US Conference of Catholic Bishops worked to craft the health care legislation in their capacity as leaders of one of the largest groups of hospitals in the country. Walsh notes that the Bishops and the Catholic Health Association, like the General Secretary of the National Council of Churches, but unlike some progressive Catholic organizations and mainline denominations, were willing to support employer mandates and managed competition, even though they had previously expressed a preference for a single payer system. Catholic lobbyists sought to combine practical technocratic concerns with a clear call for social justice and assistance to the most marginalized. Bishop John Ricard of the Domestic Justice Committee praised Clinton's

commitment to universal health care (Anderson 1993). On January 26, 1994, a representative of the United States Catholic Conference testified before the House Subcommittee on Health and the Environment regarding possible gaps in coverage for immigrants in the Health Security Act.

The Catholic Health Association undertook significant efforts independently of the Bishops. It sent officials to testify at least three congressional hearings (Health Care Reform Parts 2 and 5 1993; Health Security Act 1994), discussing the strengths and weaknesses of managed competition in hospital administration and patient care. The CHA also sought to mobilize other religious health care advocates as the bill seemed on the brink of failure. In June 1994, Democratic senator Paul Wellstone, while proposing an amendment to a defense authorization bill mandating universal health care equivalent to coverage for members of Congress, read a letter in the Congressional Record signed by a variety of progressive interest groups and health care associations. The letter expressed support for employer mandates, with an option at the state level for single payer systems. The groups affiliated with religion signing the letter were the American Association of Pastoral Counsellors, Church Women United (the women's mainline Protestant group, with significant charitable and political involvement), the executive vice-president of Brooklyn Lutheran Medical Center, and the once-powerful Protestant Health Alliance, along with the Unitarian Universalist Church, and the National Council of Churches. In July 1994, a report by the Catholic Health Association indicating the importance of universal health care for lower and middle class families was entered into the Congressional Record. Democrat Robert Underwood, the non-voting delegate from Guam, cited the study in a speech on the House floor on July 28. Both of these statements were from groups supporting the Clinton

administration's proposals. The Catholic Health Association was listed along with the National Council of Churches by *The Christian Century* as President Clinton's primary religious allies; mainline denominations on the Protestant side and the Bishops on the Catholic side, for differing reasons, were more reluctant. The Catholic Health Association did not play as prominent of a role as it would in 2009, but it began at this point to establish itself as a coalition partner with Democratic politicians, primarily because of its combination of ethical and practical belief in reform.

Concerns over Abortion

The politics of abortion was not as large of a factor as it would become in 2009. But the Catholic Bishops, sometimes backed by evangelicals, used a broad variety of tactics to oppose coverage of abortion, which made the CHA's support for the Clinton administration more remarkable and even more valuable. The 1993 USCCB document Comprehensive Health Care Reform expresses much stronger opposition to abortion than previous documents on health care, along with concerns about care for the dying. One of its guidelines is:

Respect for Human Life and Human Dignity: Real health care reform must protect and enhance human life and human dignity...Neither the violence of abortion and euthanasia nor the growing advocacy for assisted suicide is consistent with respect for human life...we are convinced it would be a moral tragedy, a serious policy misjudgment, and a major political mistake to burden health care reform with abortion coverage that most Americans oppose and the federal government has not funded for the last seventeen years.

The section on tactics will describe how the Bishops attempted to influence the crafting of Clinton's health care reform proposal on the issue of abortion. John Ricard, chair of the Domestic Justice Committee, had expressed concern about the possibility that some proposals contained coverage of abortion. In October 1993, Bishop John Ricard of the Domestic Justice Committee expressed concern about the possibility of abortion funding. James Smith, of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, also denounced the possibility of abortion coverage, personally attacking President Clinton's lack of allegiance to Southern Baptist doctrine on abortion (Anderson 1993). In April 1994, Cardinal Bernardin spoke out on the issue of abortion in a national radio address. On January 26, 1994, a representative of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities testified at a hearing before the House Subcommittee on Health and the Environment, along with a representative of the Southern Baptist Convention's Christian Life Commission, advocating against coverage for abortion and family planning. The Conference directed campaigns throughout the country's dioceses at the parish level asking for people to write to their members of Congress demanding that abortion coverage would not be included in health care reform. They also funded an advertising campaign, and engaged in direct lobbying of members of Congress by bishops (Vidulich 1994). 35 pro-life congressional Democrats, including Harold Volkmer, a Catholic, stated that they would not support a bill which allowed abortion coverage. Because no health care plan was ever even brought to the floor of either House of Congress for a vote, it is impossible to determine whether the Catholic Bishops would have hardened their opposition later as they did in 2009. Hofrening (1995) notes that the Catholic Bishops' prioritization of abortion, despite disagreement among Catholics and a significant list of other salient issues, is exceptional, as

he finds that most religious lobbyists place a high priority on issues of high salience when they have the broad support of their members. As recent attempts of health care reform have been backed by a segment of the Democratic Party that views abortion as a form of health care to which women should have rights, the Bishops' interpretation of moral theology centering on the dignity of each human life beginning at conception has been tested.

Conservative Opposition on Grounds of Feasibility and Fear of Rationing

Outright opposition included non-denominational groups led by conservative evangelicals, such as the moderate concern expressed by the National Association of Evangelicals and the Southern Baptist Convention (Walsh 2000), along with vociferous denunciations by the Family Research Council and Christian Coalition. All of these groups joined the Catholic Bishops in expressing concerns about possible abortion coverage and other ethical issues. For example, The Southern Baptist Convention's 1994 resolution listed six objections to Clinton's health care reform plan, of which three were related to abortion, contraception, or related issues. However, evangelical organizations also expressed reservations based on economics (*The Christian Century* 10/6/1993; 3/9/1994; Broder and Blumenthal 1997; Walsh 2000). They sought to link concerns with the financial feasibility of the proposal to their views of human life, primarily by arguing that further government involvement in health care would lead to rationing of care for those who needed it most, while also providing enough care for those with unhealthy or allegedly immoral lifestyles so that people would have less of an incentive to change those lifestyles. The National Association of Evangelicals, in its 1994 resolution, indicated that refusing government funding for abortion and euthanasia was a morally necessary component of any health care reform proposal, but did not promise support for reform proposals without these measures. It

ended with the position that interested parties should “enlist the counsel and help of governmental institutions, social agencies, insurance companies and churches to establish health care provisions which will maximize the creativity of the private sector while minimizing governmental control.” This relatively moderate statement still shows a more significant emphasis on the private sector in evangelical public policy recommendations. The NAE’s 1994 resolution provides evidence that evangelical concerns about universal health care are at least partially rooted in a belief that people should take responsibility for their own health. It argues that some accountability for bad behavior (including “smoking, drug and alcohol abuse, promiscuity and over-eating), and tort reform, should be main points of any health reform proposal. The NAE and SBC resolutions blame personal failings for the problems of at least some of those lacking adequate health care coverage. They both place a great deal of emphasis on tort reform as a possible solution to health care costs, not acknowledging that lawsuits against doctors are often a result of malpractice. Mainline and Catholic denominational resolutions certainly advocate a healthy lifestyle, but poor decisions are a more significant emphasis in evangelical statements. At the same time, evangelicals express concern about personal liberties, both financial and medical, that could be curtailed by health reform. This theological tendency does not apply to progressive evangelicals such as Sojourners, who, like mainline denominations, have been supportive of comprehensive health care. Therefore, though evangelicalism itself does not lead to a stance against universal health care, but the conservative, often fundamentalist interpretation dominating evangelicalism generally does.

Rationing is, as stated above, a central practical concern of evangelical opponents to health care. Discussions of rationing allow evangelicals to appear less tough-minded toward

the unhealthy, instead striking a regretful tone that coverage by the state is unworkable and provides poor care to even the most currently disadvantaged patients. The Southern Baptist Convention's 1994 resolution expresses concern about "the rationing of health care on the basis of economic decisions rather than the provision of health care on the basis of medical need", and, calling on traditional theological language "the violation of the centuries-old, covenantal relationship between physician and patient."

The Christian Coalition, near the height of its political influence at this time, distinguished itself by spending millions of dollars on an advertising campaign (Walsh 2000). CC leader Ralph Reed stated in media appearances that the possibility of rationing, higher taxes, and too much federal power, were significant enough reasons to oppose reform, in addition to concerns about abortion coverage. This motivated moderate and conservative members of Congress to harden their opposition to reform. The Christian Coalition and related social conservatives were the only religious groups mentioned by Broder and Blumenthal (1997), in their large book about Clinton's health reform efforts. The book quotes a Republican lobbyist as saying that the failure of health care reform required a completely united coalition between social conservatives, deficit hawks and business groups. The NAE and SBC, while agreeing with the concerns of other conservative evangelicals, including those involving economics, did not appear to have significant influence in the debate. In fact, Walsh classified the Southern Baptist Convention as open to reform, though advocating a system with less power given to the federal government.

Between 1993 and 2009

Throughout President Clinton's second term and the Bush administration, the National Council of Churches combined variety of incremental strategies for health care

reform with an effort to education congregations about the government's moral duty to provide health care. In 1999, the NCC's board approved a resolution calling on churches to renew advocacy for better health care. It states, in part, that the NCC "Endorsed Health Concerns Policy Statement" [adopted in 1971, reaffirmed in 1989], including the statement:

The development of a national health system which will assure quality health care as a right to all persons in an accessible, effective and efficient manner. . . . [NCC] now commends to its member communions a renewed faith community action campaign for comprehensive universal health care with democratic principles to which we have been historically committed; a campaign consisting of public education and action focused at the congregation and community level in cooperation with a larger coalition seeking to put this issue back on the national agenda. Now therefore supports a national campaign beginning during the Year 2000 elections in which coalitions at the local level, including encouragement of the widest direct participation of NCC member communions congregations, call upon candidates, particularly in federal elections, commitment to support Congress enacting universal health care coverage.

As part of this effort, a rally was held in October 1999, along with training for grassroots activists. A community organizing training was held in Cleveland in November 1999, sponsored by NCC. (NCC News).

In 2004, the NCC and many of its denominations were involved in sending a letter to Bush and Kerry about health care and other issues involving poverty (NCC News October 2004). The letter asked the candidates to discuss ways in which their policies would decrease the number of uninsured people. The initiative was part of the Interreligious

Working Group on Domestic Human Need, includes two Catholic organizations (Sisters of the Good Shepherd and Network) and several Jewish organizations, but the majority of its members are advocacy groups associated with NCC denominations, including most of its mainline churches; American Baptist Churches, Church of the Brethren, Disciples of Christ, Episcopal Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church, United Church of Christ, and United Methodist Church. In 2007, NCC completed a survey of 6000 congregations indicating that churches spend much effort on health care ministry. In reaction, NCC created a health care task force along with AARP and other organizations “in promoting a campaign to urge all Americans to seek policies that will better address the unmet needs of the poor and those who lack adequate health care coverage.” (NCC News, October 2007).

It is likely that the renewed effort on behalf of health care reform in 2007 by the NCC was the result of a combination of three factors; the completion of the NCC’s congregation survey, the battle for reauthorization of CSHIP (to be discussed below), and the Democrats regaining control of Congress. This period, in which the term of NCC’s politically active general secretary Bob Edgar ended, coincided with a renewed effort on other economic issues, especially the Minimum Wage, as discussed elsewhere in this project.

During the Bush administration, the US Conference of Catholic Bishops lobbied Congress in favor of specific legislation to address certain healthcare problems, contrasting with the NCC’s more systemically based strategy. Though still supporting reform, the pragmatic strategy of the Catholic Bishops, and its ability to work within the Republican-dominated executive and legislative branches based on their shared opposition to abortion, led it to heavily promote small reforms to make the current health care system better for the poor

people for which it was trying to advocate. In 2004 it devoted particular attention to lobbying on behalf of environmental protections designed to protect the health of children, including funding for a National Children's Cohort Study. In 2006 and 2007, the USCCB sent letters to several members of Congress in both parties thanking them for supporting the Medicaid Community-Based Attendant Services and Supports Act and the Community Choice Act. These acts provided funding which allowed people with disabilities to move out of institutional care.

While religious denominations did express concern about health care during the long period of Republican control over Congress between 1995 and 2007, the Catholic Health Association maintained a voice in public policy by testifying at congressional hearings. Databases of congressional hearing transcripts show that, just as during the 1970s and 1980s, the CHA's key administrators testified at a diverse set of hearings for House and Senate committees during the late 1990s and early 2000s. Topics included but were not limited to hospital administrations, Medicare and Medicaid, insurance regulations, home health regulations, and regulations of state health care. While this chapter will not delve deeply into these testimonies in order to focus attention on the larger legislative battles, the Catholic Health Association's actions during these years when reform was slow at best, should certainly be acknowledged and is worthy of future research. Their work during this period contributes to the argument that health care providers are more influential than denominational hierarchies and ecumenical coalitions, particularly on health care reform.

The fight over reauthorization of the Children's Health Insurance Program, which had been enacted in 1997 following the failure of Clinton's comprehensive health plan, engaged religious lobbyists, particularly as it came up for re-authorization shortly after the

Democrats regained control of Congress in 2007. It became a particular priority for individual denominations and interfaith coalitions. In July 2007, NCC and the interfaith group Pico Network led an interfaith effort to send letters to Congress in favor of a plan to insure 9 million children. (NCC News). An NCC statement claimed “PICO National Network and the NCC have generated 9,000 letters to key senators over the past week and organized SCHIP clergy coalitions in key states such as Indiana, Kansas and Missouri.” Leaders from all of NCC’s large denominations and many of the smaller churches also signed the primary letter. In September 2007, NCC President Michael Livingston, the Executive Director of the International Council of Community churches, wrote to Congress asking for the reauthorization of the Children’s Health Insurance Program, which was at that time in a conference committee between House and Senate versions of the bill. Using Matthew 18:6, Livingston stated that “Failure to reauthorize SCHIP or allowing a presidential veto is tantamount to placing stumbling blocks in the path of our children.” (NCC News). In January 2009, in the closing days of the Bush administration, Catholic Bishop William Murphy on behalf of the USCCB sent a letter to Congress supporting increased funding for the Children’s Health Insurance Program. Murphy asked that funding be provided for all pregnant women, and legal immigrants who are children. The Southern Baptist Convention’s Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, by contrast, opposed the reform efforts. Director Richard Land criticized the defeat of an amendment that would have mandated care for unborn children. At the same time, Land criticized the significant involvement of the federal government in the administration of the program, as a movement toward “socialized medicine” (*The Christian Century*).

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act

Progressive religious groups and the Catholic Church argued that lawmakers had a moral duty to improve the health care system, and that, by following appropriate parameters, they had an opportunity to pursue this duty effectively. In July 2009 a joint statement was signed by the National Council of Churches, two of its denominations (Episcopal Church USA and Evangelical Lutheran Church in America), Sojourners, Pico Network (an interfaith coalition), Union of Reformed Judaism, and notably given its later actions, the US Conference of Catholic Bishops. Containing remarkably little religious language even in comparison to other interfaith appeals, it provided several suggestions for maintaining priorities of providing health care for low income Americans, including exempting those less than 200% above the poverty line from premiums, funding comprehensive health services and funding safety net clinics.

The Catholic bishops soon began to chart an independent course. Murphy outlined a framework similar to the 1993 guidelines, and some of its policy recommendations were quite progressive. While its first criteria was already against coverage of abortion, its other two criteria required for supporting a health care bill were adequate coverage for low income Americans and immigrants. Regarding the low income, the bishops wrote to Congress in the summer of 2009:

We urge Congress to limit premiums or exempt families earning less than 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level from monthly premiums. We also recommend limiting co-payments and other costs which could discourage needed care . . . we urge Congress to ensure they will not continue to fall through the cracks of a reformed system.

While the National Council of Churches wrote a letter to Congress by Secretary General Michael Kinnemann shortly before the passage of the bill in March 2010 (NCC News 3/2010), there is little other evidence of its activity aside from its support for the activities of its closely related interfaith coalitions and its own particular denominations. As noted elsewhere in this dissertation, the beginning of the Obama administration coincided with a leadership change in the NCC which appeared to be less focused on politics. During the leadership of Joan Brown Campbell and Bob Edgar, the NCC revitalized its political connections, as Campbell had a personal friendship with the Clintons and Edgar was a former Democratic congressman. Edgar, who served during most of the Bush administration and retired in 2007, stabilized the NCC financially but also worked on progressive causes even during the most difficult political circumstances. Michael Kinnemann's continued financial restructuring, cuts in the staffs of Washington offices, and calls for more inward focus, arguably meant that the NCC did not focus as much on lobbying for health care reform as it might if Edgar had still been General Secretary.

Other organizations in favor of reform quickly engaged in more substantive grassroots mobilization with the goal of eventually influencing legislation, which also involved a lobbying relationship with the presidency. The Faith for Health coalition initiated a campaign entitled Forty Days for Health Care Reform. As part of it, the group was joined on a conference call by President Obama on August 19 which reportedly had 140,000 participants (Pew Forum 10/2009; Faith Street 8/2009). Obama and White House policy advisors took questions from a diverse group of clergy. This activity indicated that, while progressive coalitions and mainline denominations had a weaker relationship with the White House than the Catholic Health Association, these groups did lobby the President and the

executive branch, and the White House saw religious progressive coalitions as a valuable base of support. Clergy held “50 prayer vigils in 18 states with members of Congress” (Pew Forum). They also bought radio and television advertisements.

Some mainline denominations undertook their own efforts in support of the law. In the summer of 2009, the Episcopal Church’s Acts of Convention passed a resolution directing its lobbyists to work for a single payer health care system, it also mandated support for any incremental health care reform legislation. In September 2009, the United Church of Christ set a goal of sending 100,000 messages to Congress in support of health care reform (Pew 2009). After the successful passage of reform, the General Minister of the UCC, Jeffrey Black, expressed his support of the bill (*The Christian Century*, 4/20/2010).

The United Methodist Church, though very divided politically, was arguably the leading Protestant advocate of health care reform. In contrast to its position in 1993, during which it opposed the Health Security Act because it did not provide sufficient universal coverage, it took a more pragmatic approach to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. It is important to note that the denomination itself did not endorse specific proposals because its General Conference meets only every four years, but the President of the Council of Bishops was a strong supporter. Even more importantly, its General Board of Church and Society not only endorsed the bill, but was able to initiate creative strategies for advocacy. In remarks shortly before the vote on the final bill, on March 21, 2010, House speaker Nancy Pelosi specifically praised the United Methodist Church’s support for the bill (*The Christian Century*, 4/20/2010). One reason for the UMC’s importance is that it had more members of Congress than any other mainline denomination. The United Church of Christ, for example, had very little representation in Congress. The United Methodist Church also

had many moderate Democrats who were vulnerable to electoral defeat and concerned about some aspects of the bill.

In December 2009, the UMC board of Church and Society organized a particularly strong campaign to persuade Nebraska Democratic senator Ben Nelson, who is a member of the denomination, to vote for the Senate's version of the bill. This effort also involved clergy from other denominations in Nebraska. Nebraska United Methodists received an email including a script with which Nelson could be called (Condon 2009). While the United Methodist Church was not concerned about federal funding of abortion, Nelson was opposed to the Senate bill partially because it was weaker than the House bill on the issue of blocking the use of federal subsidies for abortion. Nelson also had financial concerns regarding the bill, which, given the position of the progressive religious community, were not necessarily shared by the leadership of the Methodist Church. Methodists, then, had to persuade Nelson that despite his concerns about both financial issues and the abortion issue, his duty as a Methodist and as a responsible politician was to vote for the imperfect bill in order to improve health care access. While Methodists put forth a significant effort on lobbying Nelson, it is impossible to determine whether pressure from Methodists was the deciding factor for Nelson's Yes vote. Nelson eventually agreed to a compromise which was still less acceptable to pro-life interests than the House version, in return for a tax exemption for the state of Nebraska (Altman 2010).

The Episcopal, Lutheran, Disciples of Christ, Presbyterian, and Methodist churches also had a substantial number of Republicans and moderate Democrats in Congress who opposed the reform bills, as will be discussed later. However, since as stated earlier in this chapter, over 60% of mainline clergy expressed support for universal health care (Smidt

2004; *The Christian Century*, 4/7/2010), the vast majority of mainline clergy are likely to be behind their denominations. However, even with recognition by the Pew Forum and Speaker Pelosi, the efforts of the United Methodist Church and other mainline denominations were not considered to be important enough to deserve mention in books about the legislative fight over the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, such as Landmark (2010), McDonough (2010), Altman (2011), and Brill (2015). However, they did engage in lobbying of Congress, especially moderate Democrats, as a strategy, with less grassroots lobbying and executive branch lobbying.

The commitment of the Catholic bishops to universal health care even at the late stages must be recognized as well. Even after bishops became dissatisfied with the Senate bill primarily over the issue of abortion, the Bishops continued to use rhetoric regarding poverty. It is possible to interpret these rhetorical statements as confirmation that the Bishops genuinely cared about reducing poverty through health care reform as much as blocking access to abortion, despite the criticism made of them on the left. On the other hand, the Bishops' subsequent actions to block the bill because of abortion, despite significant support for the bill by other Catholic lobbyists, makes such an interpretation harder to sustain. Their strategy of decrying both abortion and poverty in pro-life terms was made easier by the fact that the Senate bill, though more liberal regarding the issue of abortion, was more conservative in its reform proposals, as it did not have a public option; therefore, the House bill was preferable to the Bishops in almost all aspects. On February 25, 2010, Murphy and other bishops sent a letter to leaders of the Democratic and Republican parties in Congress, reiterating the three necessary criteria for the Church to

support a health care law; in this letter the order was protection for low income people, followed by no funding for abortion, and finally health care for immigrants.

The Catholic Health Association's Key Role in Passing Reform

When the Obama administration solidified plans to work for health care reform in the spring of 2009, the Catholic Health Association was among the first to become involved, in its capacity as a trade group in the hospital industry. White House logs show that CHA's director, Sister Carol Keehan met with President Obama at least seven times regarding health care reform. She also had numerous other meetings with administration officials, other hospital lobbyists, and members of Congress, often at the White House or at the offices of Democratic Senator Max Baucus (Altman 2010; McDonough 2011).

The CHA first participated in efforts of hospitals to lobby for a plan that would be acceptable to them, before any bills came through House and Senate committees. Unlike the much larger American Hospital Association and the more conservative Federal Association of Hospitals, the CHA was not against a public option. However, like other hospital associations, it was concerned about any proposals which would result in hospitals not being paid. For that reason, it was generally in support of individual mandates requiring health insurance purchases, since these would cut the numbers of patients whom hospitals would need to treat without payment. In the summer of 2009, Keehan was quoted in the *National Catholic Reporter* as saying that the CHA was not attached to any particular reform proposal (Popovici 2009). The Catholic Health Association's Sister Carol Keehan, meanwhile, expressed her organization's position to the Catholic News Service in 2009, asserting the rights of the unborn while also emphasizing issues of poverty. Filteau (2009) reproduces the statement from Keehan:

We need health reform that respects the life and dignity of every person, from conception to natural death . . . That means the unborn, it means the patient with multiple sclerosis, the patient with cancer, the young mother, the addicted, the mentally ill, the dying patient, and the frail, frail, elderly.

The CHA also engaged in grassroots activism, reportedly at the request of the Obama administration (Landmark). In June 2009, the CHA released a YouTube video called “We Can’t Wait,” featuring President Obama and arguing for the benefits of reform amidst a significant health crisis. On July 28, 2009, the CHA released an Action Alert along with Catholic Charities USA and the Saint Vincent de Paul Society, calling upon sympathizers to call members of Congress (Popovici 2009B). The American Life League and Life News criticized this initiative, arguing that there was a significant danger of abortion funding in the health care law. The ALL pointed out that Father Larry Snyder, Director of Catholic Charities, belongs to the White House Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships. However, there are no unbiased reports that this motivated Snyder’s participation in favor of health care reform. In further grassroots activity, during the summer of 2009, the Catholic Health Association was among the sponsors of television advertisements featuring Harry and Louise, the couple whose characters criticized Clinton’s health reform proposals in 1994. The couple now expressed support for reform (McDonough 2011).

The behavior of the Obama administration and key Congressional Democrats toward the CHA and other hospital organizations was part of a similar strategy used to persuade other interest groups such as the American Medical Association, insurance companies, pharmaceutical companies, medical device manufacturers and others. All of the books cited

in this chapter describing the making of health care reform state that addressing the concerns of interest groups in order to avoid provoking their opposition was an important goal for the Obama administration, in order to avoid mistakes of previous Presidents which resulted in the failure of reform. While the CHA's attention to the moral and religious dimensions of reform never went away, its negotiations provide a significant example of ways in which religious interest groups can act very similarly to other interest groups in financial considerations.

The Catholic Health Association became prominent once again in March 2010 when, on March 17, 2010, Sister Carol Keehan announced the organization's support for the final bill. Keehan had met with President Obama before her statement (Thrush 2010). This was after it had become clear that the Stupak Amendment would not be part of the final bill. While the Catholic Bishops, as discussed above, came to believe that the Senate's bill allowed federal funding of abortions, the Catholic Health Association disagreed. The Catholic Health Association continued to assert its anti-abortion stance, and perhaps would have refrained from supporting the bill if President Obama had not promised an executive order to address the concerns of pro-life advocates. *The Washington Post* noted that the CHA has done nothing to oppose the Bishops in their mandate that hospitals refuse to perform abortions. However, with the bishops still lobbying against the bill, the CHA's advocacy appeared to have been a factor in the decision of about a dozen pro-life Democrats, led by Bart Stupak, to support the bill. Although no House member specifically cited the CHA as a deciding factor, there is other evidence to indicate their influence. After the passage of health care reform, in a video prepared for CHA's June 2010 summit, Senator Robert Casey, a Catholic, pro-life Democrat, stated "I can say without any hesitation that if

the CHA were not involved in this effort, it's highly likely we wouldn't be able to pass the bill." (Allen 2010; Altman 2011; Catholic News Agency 6/5/2010). His argument that the CHA was key to the bill's passage is backed up by the attention given to the CHA's participation in books such as *Landmark*, Altman and McDonough. Additionally, Cardinal Francis George, a critic of the CHA, also believed that the CHA aided the bill's passage (Allen 2010).

Other Catholic Supporters

As noted previously, a variety of Catholic associations had supported health care reform from the beginning of the process, and many of these remained supportive even after the Stupak Amendment was taken out of the Senate bill. These groups provided assistance to the Catholic Health Association by encouraging their members to support the CHA's position. Some, such as Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good, expressed their agreement with church teaching on abortion, including opposition to its legality. Other groups such as Network Catholic Social Justice Lobby attempted to downplay the abortion issue, though Sister Simone Campbell did state the opposition of her coalition of Catholic nuns to federal funding of abortion, while arguing that the final health care bill does not include such funding (Landsberg 2010). Campbell argued that the Church's support for life in all circumstances should, in fact, be a motivation to support health care reform, since "tens of thousands of people are dying each year because they don't have access to healthcare, so that is a life issue." The participation of Network intensified in March 2010. After the Catholic Health Association came out in support of the bill, Sister Simone Campbell mobilized support for a statement signed by the leaders of dozens of orders of nuns, represented by Network Social Justice Lobby and the President of the Leadership

Conference of Women Religious, which expressed support for the final bill (Filteau 2010C). The support of the nuns may have contributed, along with the CHA, to strengthening the argument for reform among Catholic politicians. After the passage of the bill, President Obama embraced Sister Simone Campbell and thanked her for her leadership (Andersson 2010).

Some commentators noted that health care reform was another example of a growing gap between Catholic bishops and nuns, including religion scholars Katherine Mooney and Clyde Wilcox, as quoted by *The Los Angeles Times* (Landsberg 2010). The disagreement is exemplified by the fact that the leaders of the Catholic Health Association, Network, and the Leadership Conference of Women Religious were all nuns and influential supporters of the final bill. It is fair to state that bishops were primarily interested in the issue of preventing abortions while politically active nuns were primarily interested in taking care of the poor and or maintenance of the Catholic medical system. It is unfair to state, however, that the Bishops and nuns did not support each other's core goals. As Campbell told *The Los Angeles Times*, "We agree on the moral principles...It's just whether the politics of this meet our moral principles. So we're not having a fight—I hope." (Landsberg 2010).

Problems with Universal Health Care

The Bishops' overwhelming concern about abortion was apparent by the early stages of the legislative battle. A letter by Bishops Murphy, Regholi and Wester expressed three priority criteria, of which the first was related to abortion and conscience rights. The wording of their criteria was

Exclude mandated coverage for abortion, and incorporate longstanding policies against abortion funding and in favor of conscience rights. No one should be

required to pay for or participate in abortion. It is essential that the legislation clearly apply to this new program longstanding and widely supported federal restrictions on abortion funding and mandates, and protections for rights of conscience. No current bill meets this test.

After discussing funding for low income citizens and legal immigrants, as quoted in Section A, the letter returned to the centrality of the abortion issue:

We sincerely hope that the legislation will not fall short of our criteria. However, we remain apprehensive when amendments protecting freedom of conscience and ensuring no taxpayer money for abortion are defeated in committee votes. If acceptable language in these areas cannot be found, we will have to oppose the health care bill vigorously. Catholic moral tradition teaches that health care is a basic human right, essential to protecting human life and dignity. Much-needed reform of our health care system must be pursued in ways that serve the life and dignity of all, never in ways that undermine or violate these fundamental values.

Catholic Bishops and the Abortion Problem: Reluctant but Fervent Opposition

This section shows how most of the insider and outsider lobbying by the Catholic Bishops centered on the issue of abortion. *The Washington Post's* landmark book discusses the efforts of the Bishops to lobby for strong provisions against funding of abortion in the House's health care reform bill, and opposition to the bill without such language. These activities are far more extensive than the letters to Congress sent in previous sections, and display a broad range of tactics including insider lobbying, propagation of their views to the media, and mobilization of the Catholic laity through parishes. It appears that while the Bishops used rhetoric in favor of reform as a way to alleviate poverty, most of their lobbying

was related to abortion and related issues. At the funeral of Senator Ted Kennedy in August 2009, Cardinal Sean O'Malley discussed the issue of abortion in health care with President Obama. This conversation was also mentioned in Brill (2015), a book about health care reform which does not give much coverage to religious groups. This lobbying effort was likely a case of opportunity rather than a strategy, but it had significant symbolic value, since Obama and O'Malley were both mourning Kennedy, a major player in the health care debate.

From this point forward, the Bishops engaged in a mix of congressional and grassroots lobbying. *The New York Times* described the tone of the Bishops' letters regarding abortion throughout the fall of 2009 as "increasingly stern." In November, as the vote grew closer, the Bishops asked parishes to include material in parish bulletins, with a picture of a pregnant woman, and bishops began lobbying lawmakers. The Bishops met with pro-life Democrats to encourage them to hold firm on what would become the Stupak Amendment. Former Vatican ambassador Raymond Flynn was tasked by the Bishops with recording a phone message to lawmakers. Finally, shortly before the vote, Speaker Pelosi met with pro-life Democrats, and representatives of the Bishops, including the pro-life lobbyist Richard Dorflinger (Landmark 2010). This meeting finally persuaded her to allow the Stupak Amendment to come to a vote. After the Stupak amendment's passage, the Bishops did not oppose the passage of the House bill.

In one of the first Senate floor debates about health care after the passage of the House bill, Republican Mitch McConnell quoted an anonymous representative from the US Conference of Catholic Bishops as stating that the Senate bill was "the worst bill we've seen" regarding the issue of abortion, as recorded in the Congressional Record on November

20. McConnell himself is a Southern Baptist. Bishops Murphy, DiNardo and Wester wrote a second letter to the Senate in December 2009, expressing support for the Stupak Amendment which had been passed by the House in its version of the bill to address concerns about abortion, and asking the Senate to pass a similar amendment. However, the Senate, after the acquiescence of pro-life Democrats Ben Nelson and Bob Casey, passed a less acceptable compromise, as discussed earlier.

In January 2010, the USCCB released recommended pulpit announcements for priests and inserts for parish bulletins. The bulletin insert expressed support for the House version of the health care bill and displeasure with Senate amendments which included the possibility of funding for abortion in health plans (even though these funds for abortion would be segregated from federal money), and lack of conscience protections. It also continued to state that the bill did not go far enough in protecting immigrants and low income families. After discussing the abortion issue, the bulletin insert states “And the affordability credits for very low income families purchasing private plans in a Health Insurance Exchange are inadequate and would leave families financially vulnerable.” The pulpit announcements and bulletin inserts asked people to write to their representatives. Since millions of Catholics attending church received these messages, they had the potential to have a significant impact if most of those attending Catholic churches expressed the Church’s position to their representatives. However, as noted in the public opinion section, there was little change in Catholic attitudes on health care, and as will be discussed later in the section of Democratic opposition to health care, there is no evidence of Democratic lawmakers being motivated to vote against health care specifically by this campaign.

In early March, the USCCB released two documents arguing that Congress's compromise on abortion funding was not good enough (National Catholic Reporter). In a document entitled "The Cost is Too High" by Cardinal Francis George, released on March 15, 2010, the USCCB expressed disappointment that the Senate version of the bill would be considered. George announced the Bishops' strong opposition to the bill, despite a continued wish for health care reform, solely because of the prospect of government funding of abortions through most of the health care plans, and lack of conscience protection. Cardinal George also expressed disappointment with the Catholic Health Association's support of the bill. That same week, Bishops Murphy, DiNardo and Wester contributed an op-ed to *The Washington Post*, again criticizing the bill for similar reasons as George.

On March 20, Bishops Murphy, DiNardo and Wester sent a letter to the House of Representatives, urging them to fix flaws in the bill or oppose it. They began by reiterating a sentiment which begins almost every document by the Bishops on this topic: "For decades, the United States Catholic bishops have supported universal health care." This letter also expressed opposition to the bill primarily because of abortion, though it also added a reference to a lack of health care protection for immigrants. This letter also contained a significant reflection on the USCCB's role in politics: "We are bishops, not politicians, policy experts or legislative tacticians. We are also pastors, teachers, and citizens. At this point of decision, we cannot compromise on basic moral principles. We can only urge—and hope and pray—that the House of Representatives will still find the will and the means to adopt health care reform that protects the life, dignity, conscience and health of all. The legislation the House adopted, while not perfect, came closer to meeting these criteria. The Senate legislation simply does not meet them." On March 23, Cardinal George released a

statement following the passage of the Bill, again stating that universal health care is necessary, but the inclusion of abortion in health plans, conscience protections, and the inability of immigrants to purchase health plans, forces the Bishops to continue to oppose the bill. This statement also began the line of the Bishops that an executive order will not fix the Abortion funding issue.

How much of opposition by Protestants to health care was based on abortion? *The Methodist Thinker* noted in January 2010 that Lifewatch, an anti-abortion Methodist organization, sent a letter to Senator Ben Nelson, asking him to change his mind about the health care bill. In 2009, the NAE and SBC also released statements advocating against abortion coverage in health care reform. The NAE's November 2009 letter to Congress focused on opposition to any bill without specific amendments against abortion coverage. Aside from the Christian Reformed Church, which actually supported the legislation, the NAE's large denominations such as the Assemblies of God only expressed concerns regarding abortion and freedom of conscience for religious organizations, without other activity on the legislation. As will be discussed in the next section, while the NAE did express some other objections to the law, the SBC expressed much more substantial objections to more significant government involvement in health care, at least based on the plans being proposed, so that they likely would not have supported health care reform even if abortion coverage were not a politicized issue. The same is true of the Freedom Federation and its most involved members such as the Family Research Council. They, too, however, cited abortion funding as a critical problem with health care reform in their publications, and FRC's director Tony Perkins wrote a column in *Politico* in July 2009 entirely on the topic of abortion funding, written so that if a reader knew nothing else about him, they might think

he would support reform without abortion coverage. However, abortion coverage was one topic among many in their arguments, compared to the centrality of the topic in the Bishops' argument.

James Dobson, leader of Focus on the Family, a member of the Church of the Nazarene (a NAE denomination), expressed his opposition to health care reform in an online prayer broadcast in December 2009, focusing his remarks on the possibility that health care reform could lead to more access to abortion. The prayer broadcast was hosted by independent evangelical pastor Lew Engel, Senator Jim DeMint (Presbyterian Church in America) and Senator Sam Brownback (a recent convert to Catholicism) (Altman 2010).

Other Life Concerns

For some religious conservatives, opposition to abortion was only one example of what they saw as a slippery slope toward immoral actions that could be taken by the government in a public health care system that might change norms about the definition of human life. Conservatives expressed concern about a provision in the House health care bill introduced by Lois Capps in the summer of 2009 which would have provided counseling about end-of-life care for senior citizens every five years. They not only criticized this provision, but argued that even if the particular proposal was defeated, any public health care law could include such provisions later. While the Catholic Bishops opposed euthanasia, they did not mention the Capps proposal in their concerns. Some evangelicals did, however, in their part of the conservative coalition opposed to the bill. These included Kenyn Cureton of the Family Research Council, whose sermon was published on the FRC website as part of anti-reform materials to be distributed widely. Although such ideas

particularly highlighted fears that rationing could cause deaths, concerns about rationing went far beyond fears of life-threatening illnesses not being treated.

The Problem of Limited Government

Some argued that practical fears about rationing and philosophical views about government are difficult to separate. Jonathan Chait, in a 2014 article for *New York Magazine*, makes a distinction in conservative opposition to health care between practical and philosophical principles. Chait notes that conservatives object to universal health care based on fears of inefficiency such as lower quality of care (including rationing), and higher costs, including on the poor, whom the law was supposed to help. However, he argues that many conservative critics have a philosophical objection to the poor being covered by federal health care, regardless of whether the law will, in fact, cover them. Mainline and Catholic arguments for government involvement begin with scriptural calls to help the sick and poor, while arguing that governmental action is necessary to complete this task. Conservative arguments must use less directly relevant scripture; an unusual example is Kenyn Cureton's use of Daniel chapter 1, where Daniel must violate his conscience because a Babylonian king ordered everyone to change their diet for health reasons.

Evangelicals largely argued that government could not run health care because it would lead to a combination of bad outcomes including individual irresponsibility, high costs, and immoral practices such as abortion coverage and end-of-life care. The Christian Right, then, argues that the task of administering a large health care system is too big for a government, and that, given their theological view of the world, it should not be surprising that it would be inefficient. In fact, if it were to somehow work efficiently in the short term, it would inevitably be at the cost of individual right to make health care decisions, and

crippling taxes that would lead to bad outcomes. While the focus on efficiency may appear more related to ideology than theology, their theological belief that the government will inevitably subvert Christian principles if it is not bound by them contributes to their ideological framework.

Progressive religious groups and the Catholic Church tended to argue that most health care problems could be solved by funding, and, perhaps, the payment of higher premiums by those with higher income, while Catholic and some other religious hospitals argued that governmental programs could increase efficiency. The network of conservative Christian organizations including the Southern Baptist Convention, Family Research Council, Freedom Federation, Traditional Values Coalition and Concerned Women for America (Wilcox and Robinson 2011) categorically denied that this would be possible, while alluding to their philosophical view that it in fact should not be possible. The Freedom Federation's statement from September 2009 also implies that some laws may provide an easier environment for lower health costs, but opposes direct government involvement to create a comprehensive health system. The FFs's statement, as reproduced by the Pew Forum, argues that ““Individual liberties trump government-imposed obligations. We believe that individuals, communities, and doctors in the free market make better health decisions than government mandates. We believe in incentives, not coercion.”

The Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission also worked to oppose health care reform. In September 2009, Richard Land led a group of several dozen Christian radio hosts in a broadcast opposing the bill in September 2009. In March 2010, the ERLC called on its supporters to contact moderate Democrats and urge them to oppose the final bill, on the basis not only of concerns about abortion, but also the

possibility of rationing, and high costs. After the passage of the bill, Baptist Press covered the complete opposition to the bill by four of five Southern Baptist Democrats in the House (Strode 2010).

This evidence indicates that conservatives did engage in some lobbying of Congress, but focused their efforts on grassroots lobbying, mobilizing both their Christian constituencies and skeptics in the general public. Christian media appearances, along with ad campaigns, sought to add to the general effort of the conservative movement to spread concern in the general public about a variety of provisions in health reform. It was hoped that these efforts would mobilize opposition in the general public, leading to continued opposition by Republicans and the defections of moderate Democrats.

The Family Research Council's critiques of health care reform in 2009 largely center on high costs which will lead to rationing. Kenyn Cureton's sermon on health care reform focuses largely on the possibility of rationing, as does another FRC publication called "Ten Reasons why Rationing is in the Affordable Care Act." Cureton's statement notes that rationing could lead to inadequate treatments for a variety of medical conditions which are expensive.

The FRC and Freedom Federation also bought radio advertisements in several states during the summer and fall of 2009 (Pew). US News and World Report noted in October 2009 that the FRC's major ad campaign did not mention abortion, focusing primarily on high health care costs.

Thus, it is clear that opponents of health care did consider the issue of abortion, but only as part of a long series of complaints about the inability of government to initiate a just and efficient health care system. The next step in the analysis is to determine the extent to

which congressional Democrats who opposed the bill did so because of abortion, or because of other concerns. In that way we can determine the relative strengths and weaknesses of the mainline lobbyists like the United Methodist Church, the seamless garment advocates in the Catholic Church, and the evangelical conservatives, all of whom were fighting to influence these moderate Democrats.

Moderate House Democrats, Religion and Health Care

While a few Senate Republicans were involved in early negotiations to develop a compromise on health care reform, it eventually became clear that health care reform would not pass with bipartisan support, particularly in the House. Although some liberal Democrats threatened to oppose reform that was not progressive enough, most were unwilling to derail the chance for reform. Therefore, moderate Democrats were generally the members who received the most lobbying. The reasons for Democratic opposition among moderates could be divided between concerns about funding for abortion, economic concerns, and concerns about reelection. These three considerations overlapped significantly, but not entirely. While in the Senate, the final bill was more liberal on the issue of abortion but less progressive in much of the rest of the bill, the House bill was more conservative on the issue of abortion but more progressive in that it had a public option. In order to determine the influence of religious belief and religious lobbying on health care reform, it is worth taking a closer look at Democrats who opposed Speaker Pelosi's leadership, either by voting for the Stupak amendment, voting against the House bill in November 2009, or voting against the final bill in March 2010, which lacked the full Stupak amendment. Although there are many summaries of the legislative battle, and the deals which were made to change the votes of key moderate Democrats, there appears to be no comprehensive analysis of the voting

patterns of this group of congressmen on the bill, particularly focusing on the issue of religion.

There are some complications which must be addressed in this analysis. First, Democrats had differing reasons for voting in favor of the Stupak Amendment. Some were staunchly anti-abortion, while others were pro-choice but opposed federal funding. Additionally, some Democrats reluctantly agreed to support the November 2009 or March 2010 bill passage votes after pressure from Speaker Pelosi, while others were allowed to vote against it in order to protect their re-election chances, regardless of their abortion positions. Finally, two Democrats, Dennis Kucinich and Eric Massa, both Catholics, voted against the November 2009 bill because it was not progressive enough. They also voted against the Stupak Amendment. In March 2010, Massa resigned and Kucinich reluctantly voted for the March 2010 bill. They will be dropped from this analysis. I will also drop Parker Griffith, an Episcopalian Democrat from Alabama first elected to Congress in 2008, who switched to the Republican Party in December 2009 after voting for the Stupak Amendment and against the House bill.

The tables included in the appendix list all the other Democrats who either voted yes on the Stupak Amendment, no to the House version of the health care bill, or no to the Senate version of the bill. They also include their state and tenure in Congress, as a way to compare the extent to which they were in danger of losing their seat, and their religion, in order to determine the extent to which they might be under pressure from their denominations. Religious affiliations are mostly taken from Pew Research Center's Faith on the Hill publication, released at the beginning of the 111th Congress in 2009. Table 3 shows the voting positions of Democrats who voted for the Stupak Amendment. Table 4 shows the

voting positions of Democrats who voted against the Stupak Amendment but also voted against either Reform bill.

The Stupak Amendment

36 of 98 Catholic Democrats in the House voted for the Stupak Amendment. This is a similar percentage as United Methodist Democrats; 7 out of 23 voted for the Stupak Amendment. However, most of the United Methodist Democrats who voted for the Stupak Amendment were in tight re-election campaigns, as evidenced by the fact that many were defeated in 2010. While the majority of Catholic Democrats who voted for the Stupak amendment were also in particularly difficult re-election campaigns, especially in 2010 which was already looking to be a difficult midterm election, about a dozen appeared to be relatively safe. Meanwhile, four out of five Southern Baptist Democrats voted for the Stupak Amendment (Strode 2010). They were all relatively junior members with tough re-election campaigns. The fifth Southern Baptist, Al Green, is African-American and from a safely Democratic district. He would go on to be the only Southern Baptist Democrat to vote in favor of both versions of the health care bill as well. Only two black Protestants voted for the Stupak Amendment (Artur Davis is African-American but in a mainline denomination).

House Health Care Bill

Only 8 of 98 Catholic Democrats voted against the House's version of the health care bill, right after the vote on the Stupak Amendment. This included all three southern Catholic Democrats in Congress. Of these, 6 had voted for the Stupak Amendment. All except Tim Holden of Pennsylvania were in vulnerable districts, as evidenced by the fact that most were defeated or retired in the next election cycles. They all cited concerns about cost, the workability of the system, Cadillac taxes, or the concerns of their constituencies as

causes, with none citing abortion. Some Catholic Democrats needed persuasion to vote for both this bill and the March 2010 bill, especially Dennis Cardoza and Henry Cuellar (O'Connor 2010). 8 of 23 United Methodist Democrats opposed the bill, 4 of whom voted for the Stupak Amendment. They also expressed concerns about constituent reaction, as well as cost and other economic factors. Four of five Southern Baptist Democrats voted against the bill. Protestant denominations besides the Methodists and Southern Baptists do not keep track of their members of Congress internally, and have fewer members in Congress, so they will be left out of this research.

When comparing Catholics and Methodists, the higher level of Catholic support for the bill, with inclusion of anti-abortion provisions, is quite significant. Since all but one Catholic Republican was unwilling to support health care reform, these findings are not conclusive regarding a higher likelihood of Catholic elites in general to support health care reform, but it does display significant agreement among Catholic Democratic politicians. United Methodist Democrats, by contrast, contained a faction which voted against the progressive wishes of its denominational Washington office.

Senate Health Care Reform

One of the most specific interventions by Christian clergy was done to attempt to sway the vote of John Adler, the only Jewish Democrat to vote against health care. Local clergy met with him, but Adler stated that he was concerned about the impact of the law on small business, and refused to change his vote (Jewish Exponent). There are indications that Roman Catholic, Methodist and Baptist clergy lobbied congressional Democrats, but little to no specific information about the lobbying of each representative.

When comparing the November 2009 vote on the House bill and the March 2010 vote on the final bill, the four anti-reform Southern Baptist Democrats again voted as a block against the bill. Two of them mentioned the issue of abortion, but all cited economic concerns as primary reasons (Strode 2010). Among Catholic Democrats, two representatives changed their votes from No to Yes, while four representatives, including Republican Anh Cao, changed their vote from Yes to No. Cao stated that he was a strong supporter of the Stupak Amendment (The Hill). Among the new No votes, Mike Arcuri did not vote for the Stupak Amendment, so abortion was not a factor for him. Lipinski and Lynch are interesting cases for analysis, as they are from relatively uncompetitive districts, and in fact still remain in Congress. They both state that they are pro-life, but Lynch did not mention abortion in his statements against the Senate bill, focusing on financial concerns (Moskowitz 2013). Lipinski highlighted his opposition based on the exclusion of the Stupak Amendment, but also expressed other concerns (Kass 2010). John Kass, interviewing Lipinski for an Opinion column in the Chicago Tribune, quoted Lipinski as stating that he liked some aspects of the bill, such as providing insurance coverage, but also asserted that the bill was “financially unsustainable” and would result in coverage being taken from senior citizens. Lipinski certainly did express that the Church’s teaching on abortion played a part in his vote, and Kass notes that Lipinski’s district is predominantly Catholic. Thus, Stephen Lynch and Dan Lipinski are closest to what the Bishops would consider model legislators, but even they acted for other reasons besides support for the Catholic Church’s position. It is difficult to disentangle whether they would have agreed to reluctantly support the bill if stricter abortion language was added, or if some of their financial concerns were addressed without stricter abortion language.

The Hill's Whip Count mentioned about a dozen other Democrats who were considering voting against the bill because of their strong support of the Stupak Amendment; all were Catholic except Nick Rahall, a Presbyterian who voted Yes, and Marion Berry, a Methodist who switched his vote from Yes to No.

Among Catholics who switched their votes from No to Yes, Markey did not vote for the Stupak Amendment, but Boccieri did. President Obama and Speaker Pelosi worked hard to lobby Boccieri and Jason Altmire, another junior pro-life Catholic Democrat. When expressing his opposition to the bill, Altmire primarily expressed concerns about his constituents and financial flaws rather than highlighting his anti-abortion stance.

Among United Methodists, Marion Berry was the only switch from Yes to No. On the other hand, Bart Gordon from Tennessee (who announced his retirement), Alan Boyd of Florida and Suzanne Kosmas of Florida, all changed their votes from No to Yes. This shows some correlation, if not evidence, indicating that the United Methodist Church may have engaged in successful lobbying.

Aftermath

The Jesuit magazine *America* produced an editorial disagreeing with the Bishops' position, to which the Bishops responded. In May 2010, Bishops Murphy, DiNardo and Wester released a statement entitled "Bishops Note Way Forward with Health Care, Clarify Misconceptions." The Bishops declared that they have teaching authority over the Church, and expressed disappointment with those who did not understand Catholic moral theology enough to take the Bishops' concerns about abortion seriously. They also reiterated that they had a deliberate strategy to keep issues of abortion, conscience and immigration together. They stated that they would not support repeal of the health care law, but instead would

work for passage in Congress of new laws amending the objectionable parts of the law.

Father Thomas Reese, a political scientist and Jesuit magazine editor, disagreed, saying that the Bishops “do not have the charism of interpreting legislative language” (*National Catholic Reporter*).

Since 2010, the US Conference of Catholic Bishops has remained somewhat involved in health care policy after the passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, even aside from the abortion issue. Since 2011, there have been fewer updates to the USCCB website in the section on health care, almost all of which have been related to discussion of abortion and contraception mandates. Nearly all of the statements of the Catholic Bishops on their website since 2011 have been related to their fight with the Obama administration over mandated contraception coverage. Representatives of the Catholic Bishops and evangelical organizations have testified at numerous congressional hearings on this topic. In May 2011, however, Bishop Stephen Blair, the new chair of the Domestic Justice Committee, released a letter to the House Energy and Commerce Committee opposing the State Flexibility Act, which could allow states to cut Medicaid and CSHIP funding, depriving many elderly, pregnant women, disabled people and children of healthcare. Additionally, in February 2013, the USCCB released a backgrounder advocating that all states should expand Medicaid coverage. This document contained a “What You Can Do” section, indicating that all those wishing to become involved should work with their state conference of bishops on this matter. Mainline denominations, meanwhile, have been less outspoken on the issue of health care.

There is a potential opening for religious lobbying at the state level, as governors and legislators can decide whether to take Medicaid expansions which are available through the

Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. Ohio governor John Kasich, a Republican, has repeatedly used religious rhetoric to justify his decision to approve the expansions (*Los Angeles Times* 7/21/2015). However, there is little evidence of religious engagement in lobbying regarding these issues, at least through research of news media and religious advocacy websites. More research is needed to confirm this, however.

Conclusion

Evidence from books, magazines, Congressional records, and other primary and secondary sources has indicated that theological considerations have dictated the positions of denominations on health care reform. An unwillingness to compromise, also largely based on ethical concerns, a lack of sufficiently strong public opinion in favor of reform, and a lack of viable partnerships at the elite level, all played a part in limiting the ability of mainline Protestant and Catholic organizations to lobby in favor of health reform.

The Catholic Health Association has clearly been the most influential religious organization on health care policy, and its influence arguably became critical to the passage of the 2010 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, in a debate involving a high level of salience and a wide-ranging universe of interest groups. The Catholic Health Association conducted itself in ways that would be expected to yield success according to interest group literature cited in Hofrening (1995). It maintains a narrow focus on hospital administration and health care coverage. It uses insider tactics such as meetings with policy makers, while also using outside lobbying tactics such as communication with the media, its constituents and its coalition partners. It represents a trade group (Catholic health care facilities), and thus may appear to be more suited to the details of lobbying than the “prophetic lobbyists” representing religious organizations. At the same time, by most accounts it remained true to

the theological goals of its denomination. Finally, it established itself as a negotiating partner with moderate Catholic Democrats whose votes were critical to passing the bill.

The US Conference of Catholic Bishops devoted more effort to insider tactics in 2010 than other religious organizations, in addition to more peripheral tactics used by the Protestant denominations such as writing form letters to Congress and public rallies. They worked to lobby particular members of Congress, including the Speaker of the House. At the same time, the Catholic Church worked to consolidate support within the Church itself. The United Methodist Church also attempted to do this, with mixed success. Additionally, the Catholic Bishops narrowed their focus, a task which they have often found hard. By focusing completely on removing funding from the health care bill, they shifted debate toward the abortion issue, which is theologically most important for them, and though they did not consider their efforts successful, they became a significant player in the outcome of the legislation. On the other hand, their focus on the abortion issue arguably detracted from their efforts to pursue more progressive health care policy, which they, and some but not all of their Democratic supporters in Congress, truly did want. This case is an exception to the rule that Catholic Charities successfully moves their denomination toward a progressive policy. While unlike evangelicals, Catholic bishops did not have a theological commitment opposing health care reform, their prioritization of abortion was strong enough to overcome the preferences of a majority of members, their theological commitments, and the general interests of their charitable agencies on issues not related to reproductive health.

Meanwhile, mainline Protestant denominations had more influence on the health care debate in 1994, when the White House actively worked to gain their support, than in 2009. Though mainline Protestants were able to mobilize their network of supporters toward a

more united position in 2009, the Obama administration and congressional Democrats generally focused more on their relationship with the CHA. In neither year was it demonstrated that lobbying by mainline denominations, or efforts by mainline denominations to mobilize their congregations, contributed to changes in the content of the health care bill, or in changing congressional votes. Meanwhile, evangelical opposition to reform was somewhat less influential in 2009 because of the decline of the Christian Coalition, but conservative theological interpretations of government contributed significantly to the debate. Overall, religious groups appear to have had more involvement in the debate on federal health care than on minimum wage policy at the federal level, but less than their involvement on welfare policy, with the exception of the debate on abortion coverage.

Chapter 4: Welfare Reform

Protecting the Shrinking Welfare State

Other policy chapters in this project will examine government regulations on employers designed to protect the working poor (minimum wage policy), or one particularly difficult expense for many poor people (health care). This chapter examines religious efforts to support a safety net of direct payments by the government to specific poor individuals and families. Chapter 2 described how religious groups largely came to support welfare programs by developing theological responses to economic and social crises and seeking solutions to the problem of over-burdened religious charitable agencies; meanwhile, mobilization of theological conservatives, an overall backlash against the welfare state, and opportunities for direct aid to faith-based organizations fostered skepticism of welfare policy in many conservative Christian circles.

This chapter will focus on the substantial efforts of progressive Protestant organizations, the Catholic bishops and Catholic Charities to protect welfare and especially food stamps. Their positions are based on the premise that there should be a minimum standard of living for all (particularly children), that full employment is impossible to achieve (especially without significant government investment), that religious charities cannot deal with the needs of the poor without government assistance, and that welfare encourages family stability. The Catholic Bishops are particularly concerned about the impact of welfare cuts on abortion rates. The strategies of religious progressives have shifted several times in the past two decades. During the Clinton administration, the Catholic Bishops cultivated a unique alliance with pro-choice advocates to highlight the possibility that cuts in welfare could lead to higher abortion rates. Meanwhile, mainline Protestants

cultivated a close alliance with the Children's Defense Fund, and Catholic Charities was at the forefront of efforts by religious charitable organizations to oppose welfare reform. These efforts were meant to persuade lawmakers that religious charities could not replace governmental programs, and that thus the government must uphold its duty to the poor. During the Bush administration, religious charities, along with mainline and Catholic denominational organizations, argued for re-authorization of welfare programs, based on the understanding that Bush's proposal for faith-based partnerships could not replace government programs. Eventually, as the promise of faith-based partnerships foundered, some moderate conservatives began engaging with more progressive religious charities on the issue of poverty.

By the first term of the Obama administration and the Republican recapture of Congress in 2010, when cuts to welfare were threatened again, the National Association of Evangelicals was ready to cooperate with mainline Protestants and Catholics. This time, the arguments were less centered on the issues of charitable needs, even though religious charities were still quite involved. Nor did the arguments focus on the abortion issue, even though abortion remained politically salient. Rather, the new coalition, the Circle of Protection, returned to more traditional moral arguments combined with economic claims that there were better ways to deal with the national debt than cutting programs for the poor in order to decrease it in the short-term. The Circle of Protection took this approach because arguing based on the debt issue was the best way to capture the attention of both their new evangelical allies and their Republican opponents. Nevertheless, many religious conservatives, especially but not exclusively evangelicals, have continued to maintain their argument that welfare does not provide incentives for work and family formation, while

putting the government deeper into debt. These concerns of religious conservatives about hard work and family values have set the tone for Republican rhetoric and led to the implementation of some of the Christian Coalition's welfare reform recommendations. However, conservative religious groups on their own have lobbied less than religious progressives on the specific issue of welfare. All in all, though theological interpretations motivate political positioning on welfare, the interests of religious charities and relationships with coalition partners usually determine the extent of lobbying efforts.

This chapter will show how these dynamics have continued since the beginning of the Clinton administration, with a focus on the battles over the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act, and the raising of the debt ceiling between 2011 and 2013. It will focus on two federal programs which are designed for the most disadvantaged; Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF, previously AFDC, and also sometimes known as welfare) which provides payments to families, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, previously and sometimes still colloquially known as food stamps) which provides vouchers for food to individuals and families. The 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act strictly curtailed the use of these programs and devolved the administration of TANF to the states, but also provided limited funding to develop mechanisms for people on welfare to find jobs. The chapter will consider the primary questions of religious involvement in welfare and food stamp protection first by examining the legislative history and recent public opinion polling, and then by analyzing religious lobbying during the battle over the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act, the following decade's reauthorization battles, and efforts to increase the debt ceiling during the Obama administration.

Legislative History

The Aid to Dependent Children Program was created in 1935 as part of the Social Security Act, primarily to provide benefits for widows with children (Katz 1996). It was expanded in the 1960s as part of President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty, by which time single mothers also became eligible. It was among programs which faced budget cuts in the 1980s. In the 1996 welfare reform legislation, it was abolished and was replaced by Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF). (Katz 1996; Trattner 1999). Food stamps were first created during the New Deal. After two decades without them, they were reinstated as a pilot program in 1961 and passed as a permanent program in 1964 as part of the War on Poverty. They were reformed as part of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act in 1996 (including time limits and spending cuts), and again in 2008 when the name of the program was changed to SNAP.

Guaranteed Income and other Pre-Reagan Reform Efforts

As discussed in Chapter 2, in 1969 the Nixon administration was interested in creating a Family Assistance Program, which was supported by the United States Catholic Conference and the National Council of Churches (McAndrews 2012). Also known as a negative income tax, such a program would insure that all families earned a minimum annual income proportionate to its size. Those who were able to work but whose jobs did not provide wages higher than the minimum income could receive welfare benefits up to the minimal income level. These efforts failed as some liberals refused to support the bill unless it provided higher benefits and many conservatives turned against it for fiscal cost reasons. The FAP debates finally resulted in the passage of the Earned Income Tax Credit in 1975. EITC was expanded in 1986, 1990, 1993, 2001 and 2009, usually with bipartisan support,

but with significant haggling on details, with Republicans often opposing attempts to give poor families higher refunds than the income they earned (Faler 2015). The issues of income tax credits and welfare programs such as food stamps have lately become intertwined as they often are under threat from the same budget cutting proposals.

Welfare Reform

Bill Clinton promised to “end welfare as we know it” in his 1992 election campaign, and Republicans had welfare reform as a priority after the 1994 elections. The Republicans’ Contract with America, its policy platform for the 1994 election campaign, included promises to cut welfare programs and mandate that all those receiving government assistance should work. In 1995, Congress passed the Work Opportunity Act (HR 4), which was vetoed by the President. After Clinton vetoed welfare reform a second time, Congress passed a modified version, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act (HR 3734) in August 1996, which Clinton signed. The most significant provisions included the end of AFDC, to be replaced by TANF. TANF became a block grant, to be distributed to states which could develop their own programs. Generally speaking, most Democrats wanted to keep more programs administered at the federal level and add more mandates for people whom states had to cover or provide alternative support such as job training to replace federal programs that had been cut. Republicans generally wanted to move more federal programs to the states, while adding some categories of people which states did not have to, or in a few cases, could not cover. However, there was negotiation between moderate Democrats and moderate Republicans about some of the details of federal mandates. In a major concession to Democrats, food stamps were kept under federal

administration; this was a key demand of religious interest groups generally opposed to reform. However, funding for the food stamp program was cut (Perr 1996C).

In a victory for conservatives, a strict time limit of five years was introduced as a federal mandate to all states for a person to be covered by TANF. States were also incentivized to implement work requirements as soon as possible, along with job training programs, into their welfare programs; the job training programs had general bipartisan support. States gained significant power to remove eligibility before time limits.

Among the most significant disputes within Congress, and within the religious community, regarded the issue of family caps. In the final outcome, states were given the power to refuse increases to mothers who have more children while on welfare, but these “family caps” were not mandated federally as some conservatives had wanted. In a compromise, mothers under 18 were required by federal rules to live with their parents and stay in school to receive benefits, while states had the discretion to set family caps or not. Funds for immigrants were cut. Additional child support enforcement was also added as an effort to generate income for single mothers. (Pear 1996C).

The House’s welfare bills were always more conservative than the Senate’s. Largely for this reason, many Senate Democrats supported welfare reform in all Senate votes. In the House, small numbers of House Democrats voted for welfare reform bills until the final conference report for HR 3734, when exactly half of House Democrats supported it.

| Welfare Reform Bill | # of Democrats voting yes |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| House Version of HR 4 | 9 |
| House Conference Report of HR 4 | 17 |
| House Version of HR 3734 | 30 |
| Conference Report of HR 3734 | 98 (And 98 voted no.) |

Table 2: Number of Democrats voting in favor of welfare reform bills.

While some Republicans were also divided on specific proposals, as will be discussed below, the party was almost entirely united on all floor votes.

In 2002, TANF came up for reauthorization. Senate Democrats blocked passage of Republican proposals which would have further cut the program, and Congress continued to fund the program through temporary measures until 2005. TANF was eventually included in the budget reconciliation bill for 2006 (Massaro 2007). In 2010, it was quietly reauthorized by President Obama and the Democratic Congress as part of budget reconciliation. Since 2010, TANF has again been funded by temporary measures (*The Washington Post* Editorial Board 2015).

Clinton's Welfare Reform

Was Religious Lobbying Effective?

The Clinton administration began on a note of promise for collaboration with religious progressives. This period was a time of flux and reorganization for interfaith advocacy groups, as Interfaith Impact, profiled in Chapter 2, was on the brink of collapse. During the 1992 election campaign, the National Council of Churches and the Catholic Bishops had begun a joint initiative with Jewish groups to discuss poverty (Cornell 1992B). The result of these efforts was a conference in June 1993. The coalition, known as the Common Ground for the Common Good, was planned to be the most significant collaboration between mainline Protestant, Catholic, Jewish and other religious groups since the civil rights movement of the 1960s. Following the 1993 conference, it released a statement calling for strong efforts on behalf of the poor (*Episcopal Archives* 1993, *The Christian Century* 2/1994).

As was discussed in the chapter on health care, religious progressives initially had significant access to Clinton administration officials; religious lobbyists described to Tipton (2007) how a variety of policy makers repeatedly asked religious leaders for ideas, including on the issue of poverty. The fallout of the health care reform debate and the 1994 elections limited this access by the time of the welfare reform debate (Tipton 2007). The new promise of interfaith coalitions also foundered. NCC secretary Joan Brown Campbell continued to tout the significance of the Common Ground group, although their statements received little media attention. Many of the same groups eventually founded other organizations, such as Interfaith Alliance (*The Christian Century* 4/26/1994), and the Cry for Renewal (later the long-term viable organization Call to Renewal, to be discussed below). These groups were founded with the specific intention of protecting social welfare programs from threatened cuts, and urging more governmental aid to the poor. On the ecumenical side, dominated this time by progressive mainline clergy and evangelical progressive Jim Wallis, the newly established Cry for Renewal had meetings with congressional leaders in June 1995 (*The Christian Century* 6/7/1995).

Yet when the Republican Party threatened the welfare system which mainline and Catholic organizations were determined to preserve, religious organizations working on behalf of the poor appear to have lost much of their access, and could mobilize little support from their rank and file that might have helped them maintain it. Religious lobbyists themselves, media accounts, and some Democratic politicians, argued that lobbying by progressive organizations, implicitly including religious groups, was ineffective. In May 1995, Sharon Daley, a lobbyist for Catholic Charities, told *The Washington Post* that Catholic Charities and other advocates for the poor were largely excluded from the process,

stating regarding committee hearings, “we had to fight to testify, and when we did it was at 8 o’clock at night after almost all the members and all the press had gone, despite the fact that Catholic Charities is the largest provider of services in the country and one in four Americans is Roman Catholic.” Daley also pointed out that Catholic Charities was even largely ignored by Republicans on the issue of abortion (Vobejda and Havemann 1995).

Gring-Pemble (2003), who conducted a scholarly study of committee hearings on welfare reform in 1995-1996, verifies that Republicans exerted significant control over the invitation and placement of hearing witnesses. While the Contract with America hearings in early 1995 included a panel entirely of religious witnesses, many of whom were against welfare reform proposals, the influence of religious progressives declined after this point. In fact, the hearings on welfare reform were among the first applications of new congressional procedures implemented by the Republican Congress. As Sinclair (2006), Mann and Ornstein (2006) and other literature on Congress describes, the new procedures disadvantaged minority interests by limiting opportunities for the Democrats to invite and select the most appropriate times for sympathetic hearing witnesses to testify. It is possible, then, that some of the weakness of religious group was more a failure to immediately adapt their lobbying techniques than a lack of organization and commitment.

In October 1995, as welfare reform negotiations between the two houses of Congress and the President coincided with budget negotiations and a government shutdown, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan gained wide media attention as he lamented the silence of “flaunted, vaunted advocacy groups” (Havemann 1995; Lewan 1995B). A Democratic Senate aid stated that religious and other welfare reform opponents had generated “very little mail, very few phone calls, and only muted lobbying on behalf of their position” (Havemann

1995). In November, *The New York Times* still perceived liberal groups to be largely absent, quoting religious lobbyists as being overwhelmed by the wholesale attack on long-standing social programs and a lack of public support (Lewan 1995B). On December 9, a protest by Sojourners and other religious progressives, in which they were voluntarily arrested at the Capitol, received coverage in *The New York Times*, but “made barely a ripple”; it was not seen by any lawmakers and did not distinguish itself from other protests on the Capitol grounds that day (Clines 1995). NCC general secretary Joan Brown Campbell claimed after the passage of welfare reform that the lobbying effort by religious groups was poor, as she had done when health care reform failed. In interviews provided by Tipton from 1997, she asked “did he [Clinton] get hundreds of phone calls? No” and “If he had been more highly praised for vetoing the first bill, he may not have signed it later.”

On the other hand, religious groups, especially Catholics, maintained influence through their private charities, which dominated congressional hearing testimony by denominational organizations. They argued that it would be unjust to deprive the poor of these necessary programs. But rather than focusing on morality based on religious perspectives, they focused on rebutting the arguments of some conservatives who believed that religious groups themselves should take over from government programs, by proving that religious charities would be unable to take up all of the work done by government programs, lacking both financial resources and trained social workers. Religious groups, especially mainline denominations and private charities, worked in coalition with the Children’s Defense Fund to make this case and to achieve some of the concessions to Democrats which were included in the final welfare reform bill, most notably the continued federal administration of the food stamp program. The other significant work by religious

organizations was the work of the Catholic Church, as a very important part of a coalition with pro-life organizations, on the specific issue of family caps in welfare, resulting in some concessions that can be attributed largely to their efforts. Catholic emphasis on the family cap issue was the result of Catholic prioritization of the abortion issue, a desire to follow up on the progressive economic rhetoric in their recent documents, and a desire to counter the narrative put forward by evangelicals and some conservative Catholics that welfare is harmful to family values. However, it is clear that mainline and Catholic groups largely failed in their efforts to increase food stamp benefits, include more lenient provisions for work requirements of mothers and time limits for benefits, and increase funding for job training programs. The expertise of charitable agencies, and the emphasis of the Catholic Church on family cap provisions, show how ineffectively religious organizations were in framing welfare as a social justice issue.

The Strategies and Impact of Charitable Institutions

Religious charities, as usual, sought to link moral concern for the plight of the poor with information about the limited capacity of religious groups to help the poor. An August 1995 letter to Congress from an interfaith coalition of Catholic, mainline Protestant and black Protestant religious denominations and charitable institutions exemplifies this effort, stating: “We are gravely concerned that some current proposals rely on the idea that the religious community can provide for those who will ‘fall through the cracks’ of the safety net, cracks created by proposed reforms now before Congress. In fact, over the last decade, our social service providers have experienced a marked increase in the demand for our services, which are now operating at full capacity. Many of these services, in fact, are currently a partnership between government and religious bodies, dependent upon

government funding. A recent study on the effect of the proposed budgetary reforms by Independent Sector reveals that charitable contributions would have to double over the next seven years in order to compensate for the massive cuts proposed by the House. Since the present system severely challenges the religious community's ability to meet the needs of the country's poor, we fear that the current proposals would completely overwhelm our resources for serving the needy.”

Committee hearing testimony and letters to Congress provided lawmakers and their staff with specific, practical information; that religious charities cannot compensate for decreased government programs, and that job training programs as proposed in legislation would not lead to full employment, and thus would lead to many still needing some sort of comprehensive assistance through little to no fault of their own.

Media accounts regarding opposition to welfare reform frequently quoted religious charities warning that they would be unable to provide programs to serve those whom government would not cover. Freudenheim (1996) profiled concerns by a variety of religious charities about upcoming budget cuts to poverty programs, which motivated actions by the NCC and Catholic organizations. In 1995, Catholic Charities president Fred Kammer told *The Washington Post* that religious charities provide a “tattered patchwork” of services, usually limited to supplementary items and resolving emergencies. “What none of us do is to provide regular income to poor families. I speak here for everybody—Catholic, Protestant, Salvation Army, Jews, evangelicals. Nobody has that kind of money.” (Goodstein 1995B).

Catholic Charities distinguished itself as the most organized promoter of this point of view in the halls of Congress. Rosenfeld (1995), in a profile of Catholic Charities lobbyist

Sharon Daley, describes how, by the summer of 1995, Daley was undertaking congressional lobbying efforts on the issue of welfare reform daily, including informal and formal meetings with congressional lobbyists and their staffs, testifying at hearings, and compiling statistics about welfare. There are examples of Catholic Charities serving as the only religious witnesses at hearings on welfare reform in early 1995. Fred Kammer, the director of Catholic Charities testified again in February before the House Subcommittee on Department Operations of the Agriculture Committee (Reforming the Present Welfare System, 1995).

Lobbying on behalf of the poor by religious charities was certainly not limited to the heads of the national Catholic charitable agency. Particularly during the early stages of the legislative consideration, when opportunities to testify at hearings were somewhat more open, a variety of Catholic and Protestant organizations shared with congressional committees the difficulties that welfare reform would cause. Although the influence of this testimony appears to have been limited, as it received few media mentions or citations in later books, it is worth noting as a clear attempt at lobbying. Religious leaders, primarily associated with charities, were included as nearly an entire panel in one of the first congressional hearings on the topic of welfare reform after the beginning of the 1995 Congressional sessions; before the Subcommittee on Human Resources of the House Ways and Means Committee, regarding the Republican Contract with America plan. Though Catholic Father Robert Cirico of the Acton Institute was in favor of reform, the rest of the witnesses (representatives of Catholic Charities, Lutheran Welfare Services and a non-denominational charity called Feed the Children) expressed concerns about reform proposals (Contract with America and Welfare Reform 1995).

Protestant Reverend Donald Roberts of Goodwill Industries, Catholic Sister Mary McGeady of Covenant House (a charity for troubled youth), and John Carr, director of the Catholic Bishops office of Social Development, testified before the Senate Finance Committee in March 1995 (Welfare Reform and Interested Organizations, 1995). While these testimonies included exhortations for the federal government to set a moral priority of taking care of the poor, they were dominated by observations from those working directly with the poor on personal responsibility, and ways in which welfare is required to meet basic needs. The prevalence of charity directors, above bishops, denominational heads and other administrative clergy, indicated that members of Congress were primarily interested in receiving information about direct work by religious organizations with the poor, rather than moral statements.

As the legislative process moved on, progressive religious organizations worked with secular allies in the charitable field. These included think tanks such as the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities and the Urban Institute, which produced statistics on poverty shared by religious groups (Tipton 2007). But it was the Children's Defense Fund which appears based on media reports to be the most important partner. In early October, Religious groups were represented along with civil rights and other advocacy groups at a press conference organized by the Children's Defense Fund, calling for President Clinton to veto the reform bill passed by Congress (Havemann 1995). The religious call for a veto was again publicized at a second press conference with the Children's Defense Fund (Steinfelds 1995B), whose director, Marian Wright Edelman, wrote an open letter to President Clinton stating that welfare reform violated God's command to protect children. The National Council of Churches' primary contribution to the coalition was a letter signed by the leaders

from a cross-section of many of its denominations urging him to veto any bill, whether welfare reform or budget balancing legislation, which cut services to the poor. Earned Income Tax Credits and food stamps were among those specifically mentioned (*The Christian Century* 10/6/1995). In early November, The National Council of Churches, now joined by the national Congress of Black Churches and Catholic bishop Joseph Sullivan (the Bishops' liaison to Catholic Charities) again asked President Clinton to veto even the more moderate, Senate version of the welfare bill (Shogren 1995B). In mid-November, the National Council of Church's administrative board met and passed resolutions criticizing budget cuts. Joan Brown Campbell was among a dozen NCC leaders, including mainline Protestant, black Protestant and Orthodox clergy, who also met with Clinton to discuss budget and welfare reform proposals (*The Christian Century* 12/6/1995). Unlike a similar meeting with Catholic bishops to be discussed below, the meeting with NCC leaders on November 18, did not generate national media attention from *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Los Angeles Times*, but still represented efforts by the White House to communicate with religious progressives. But *The New York Times* claimed that it was specifically Children's Defense Fund director Edelman's letter which inspired Clinton's veto (Pear 1996A). Thus, while mainline Protestant groups by themselves were not a significant lobbying voice, they played a supporting role in a coalition which fought off, though temporarily, a serious attack on the welfare system. Tipton (2007) notes that the coalition between mainline and black Protestants and the Children's Defense Fund was a loose, temporary one. Tipton quotes mainline lobbyists as being generally positive towards the CDF, but also frustrated with the CDF's tendency to side with Catholic agencies over mainline Protestant denominations on issues such as regulations of adoption agencies.

Religious charitable organizations had less influence at committee hearings in early 1996 than they had the previous year, but Catholics associated with charitable agencies still made some appearances. In February 1996, Father Fred Kammer, director of Catholic Charities, testified at a Senate Finance committee hearing opposing a proposal by the National Governor's Association which was designed to give states control of welfare. In March 1996, Sister Mary McGeady testified at a hearing of the House Subcommittee on Human Resources on the relationship between poverty and illegitimacy.

In May 1996, Sharon Daley of Catholic Charities noted that President Clinton was more favorable to entitlement reform than Catholic Charities would like, but, incorrectly, doubted that he would sign welfare reform into law. The Bishops and Catholic Charities continued to lobby against the proposal of turning federal programs into block grants for the states, arguing that federal guaranteed entitlements were necessary to protect the welfare of children (Jones 1996B). It was Bread for the World, the ecumenical food policy organization, which put forth the most significant grassroots lobbying efforts. It mobilized 44000 calls to the White House urging a veto of the welfare reform bill (Vobejda 1996A).

Evangelical conservatives, with a few conservative allies in other religious traditions, were conspicuous by their unwillingness to join such coalitions. While some groups such as the NAE and SBC tried to avoid taking a position, Organizations such as the Christian Coalition lent religious backing to conservative portrayals of welfare recipients. As will be discussed below, they argued that the failure of the poor to keep and form stable families is a primary reason for the cycles of generational poverty, and that governmental programs perpetuate such cycles. Evangelical support of conservative welfare reform proposals, as noted above, included arguments that welfare discourages work and family values among

the poor, and that churches can handle much of the work done by public aid. The Christian Coalition supported welfare reform in its Contract with the American Family and even made detailed suggestions about work requirements and time limits which were largely implemented. It advocated for the replacement of welfare with a system of “faith-based compassion.”

Catholics Advocate beyond Charitable Interests

At least in terms of federal welfare policy, the most substantial activity not directly connected to charitable institutions and secular coalition partners was dominated by the Catholic Bishops’ concern about welfare leading to increased abortion rates. To be sure, however, there were some efforts by the Bishops to oppose welfare reform as a whole, based on overall concerns about social justice. Catholic bishops were also at the forefront of opposition to welfare reform at the state level, which was often tied to the federal welfare reform project. The Catholic Bishops released its Policy Priorities for welfare reform in March 1995, and a shorter statement following the US Catholic Conference’s spring administrative board meeting, declaring its support for ‘genuine’ welfare reform, but opposition to current legislative proposals. It called for state and local block grants only with significant planning and resources, and argued for child enforcement, marriage incentives, and Earned Income and child tax credits to be increased (O’Brien 1995). Senator Moynihan and Catholic Conference social development director John Carr discussed this statement at the March 1995 Senate Finance Committee hearing.

The United States Catholic Conference, represented by Cardinal William Keeler, clarified the following day that it was not yet calling for a veto; instead it wished to wait until the outcome of conference negotiations. However, the Fall 1995 meeting of the

Conference of Catholic Bishops, as described by Anderson (1995), took place from November 13 to 18, shortly after Pope John Paul II's visit to the United States and amidst a continuing political crisis over budget negotiations between Congress and the President. These factors served as opportunities for Cardinal Roger Mahoney and other more progressive bishops to successfully change the meeting agenda to address welfare reform, in order to maximize the Bishops' political influence. The Bishops passed a letter encouraging the President to veto a Republican plan to balance the budget within seven years that included cuts to welfare and no tax relief for the working poor. Cardinal Keeler released a statement calling on both parties to support services for the poor, and the new President of the Conference, Bishop Anthony Pilla, visited the White House specifically to discuss welfare with President Clinton. During Senate debate over the final bill on August 4, 1996, Senator Moynihan read a letter from Anthony Pilla of the Conference of Catholic Bishops, in a speech which was reproduced in *The Washington Post* (Moynihan 1996). In a message expressing disappointment after President Clinton signed the bill in August 1996, Cardinal Bernard Law expressed concern that the law would result in increased poverty for "children born and unborn, their families, and those new to our shores" (*The Christian Century* 8/14/1996)." These events indicate that the Catholic Church mobilized more activity, but it was primarily influential during the initial stages of introducing the bill, during a brief period coinciding with a government shutdown and a papal visit, and the passage of the bill.

There were two fights at the state level which exemplified the Bishops' broad approach to opposing welfare reform. In Pennsylvania, Catholic bishops opposed Governor Robert Casey's plans to cut welfare in 1994. The disagreement between the Bishops and Casey is particularly interesting given that Casey was one of the few high-profile Democrats

to oppose abortion. In March 1995, Pennsylvania's Catholic bishops, including Cardinal Anthony Bevelacqua of Philadelphia, backed the efforts of the Church at the federal level with grassroots action to protest both state and federal welfare cuts (Rosenberg and Macklin 1995). In the summer of 1996, Catholic bishops unsuccessfully opposed Wisconsin's welfare reform program, both at the legislative level and at the federal level when a regulatory board was faced with the decision to approve it. The Wisconsin episode gained media attention because the state's welfare plan mirrored Republican proposals at the federal level, especially strict time limits for working mothers. Milwaukee's Archbishop Rembert Weekland held a press conference in the center of Milwaukee, wrote an op-ed in *The Washington Post*, and made personal appeals to Wisconsin's conservative Catholic governor, Tommy Thompson (Schaefer 1996; Weekland 1996; Yamane 2005). Thompson responded by declaring Weekland unfit to speak on economic policy, needling the archbishop for his academic work on early Christian chant (Yamane 2005). Most of the attention of religious groups was taken up by welfare reform at the federal level, but these state-level examples, which are difficult to find regarding mainline and evangelical organizations, indicate significant activism by the Catholic Bishops beyond the particular legislative battle over welfare reform. Yet, when examining *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *The Los Angeles Times*, along with *The National Catholic Reporter*, there are few more examples of activity by state Catholic conferences during this period.

The Problem of Abortion

While the Catholic Bishops Conference, as mentioned above, certainly wished to incentivize marriage, along with providing a framework of social justice, its primary priority was finding ways to cut abortion rates, regardless of the familial structure of resulting

children. They were rarely more active on these efforts than during the period from 1995 to 1996. The Catholic bishops also released statements opposing family cap proposals (Claiborne 1994), in a foreshadowing of one of the key debates of the 1995-1996 welfare reform battle. Early in 1995, when debate intensified about family cap provisions as legislative discussion on welfare reform began, The collaboration between pro-life groups (especially Catholic organizations) and pro-choice groups gained significant media attention (Goodstein 1995A; Shogren 1995A; Steinfels 1995A; Perr 1995A; Lewan 1995A). In late January, there were significant debates from within the pro-life movement at the March for Life in Washington DC. On January 31, a joint statement was released by the US Catholic Bishops, Catholic Charities, Feminists for Life, and the National Right to Life Committee (Goodstein 1995A). Opposition to family caps was a primary topic in testimony by Catholic Charities at a Human Resources Subcommittee hearing (Contract with America 1995). In early March, Cardinal John O'Connor expressed concern about family caps and benefit cuts leading to increased abortion rates in a column for Catholic New York, which received *New York Times* coverage (Steinfels 1995A). He also expressed opposition to the Christian Coalition's Contract with the American Family based on concerns about abortion rates (Walsh 2000). Lobbying intensified in subsequent days as the US Catholic Conference officially called for family caps to be taken out of legislation in official statements (Pear 1995A; Lewan 1995A).

One way that we can determine the high degree of influence by the Catholic Church on family cap policy as compared to other areas of welfare policy is that there was significant response by congressional Republicans, who were sharply divided in their approaches. House Human Resources subcommittee chair E. Clay Shaw responded

skeptically to the arguments of the Bishops (Shogren 1995A). However, at least three Republican congressmen (Christopher Smith, Henry Hyde and Jim Bunn) expressed support for the position of the Bishops (Steinfels 1995A; Pear 1995A).¹³ On March 20, House Rules committee chair Gerald Solomon moved, based on concerns about abortion rates, to ease restrictions on benefits for teen mothers and mothers of additional children in welfare reform proposals (Havemann and Devroy 1995). Months later, Senate Majority leader Bob Dole was persuaded by the efforts of Catholic Charities to avoid reducing or eliminating aid for mothers who have out-of-wedlock children while on welfare (Rosenfeld 1995, Vobejda 1995) Congressional Democrats also provided some support to the Bishops' efforts in opposition to family caps. On April 6, 1995, Senator Moynihan entered a statement in the Congressional Record by Albany Catholic bishop Howard Hubbard, who described his experiences working with pregnant teenage girls. Hubbard argued that single mothers often faced difficult circumstances before their pregnancies and rely on government aid to improve their own and their children's lives.

Following Clinton's veto, the issue of abortion, especially concerning family caps, returned to prominence. In late January 1996, a variety of Catholic advocates both against abortion and for the poor testified before the House Human Resources Subcommittee, and also at a hearing for about 20 staffers of anti-abortion members of Congress (Jones 1996A). Representatives for the Catholic Bishops' pro-life and Peace and Justice offices joined Fred Kammer and Sharon Daley of Catholic Charities and the executive of the National Right to Life Committee. They were again supported by Republican congressman Christopher Smith

¹³ Hyde and Smith were both Roman Catholics with long careers in Congress and were among the most frequent sponsors of anti-abortion legislation. Bunn, a freshman, was the only Republican not to sign the Contract with America, specifically because of concerns about welfare cuts leading to increased abortion rates. Smith introduced an amendment which would have provided funding to vouchers for needs specific to babies.

and Jim Bunn. They worked in a coalition with pro-choice advocates who testified at a hearing for House Democrats, putting forward recommendations against provisions in the Personal Responsibility Act which would have taken benefits from mothers who had more children while on welfare, mothers under 18, and mothers of children of unknown paternity.

In the end, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act did not mandate that states include family caps in all states, as many conservatives would have preferred, but did allow states to implement them. While only a partial victory, this compromise is an example of influence by the Catholic Bishops and Catholic Charities. Mainline Protestants and other religious progressives also opposed family caps in their statements and letters to Congress, but Catholic opposition to family caps took most of the media attention and positive reactions from Congress. Arguments regarding these provisions were among few examples of congressional Republicans citing arguments of the Catholic bishops to moderate welfare reform.

Evangelicals, while claiming to prioritize opposition to abortion, were far more interested in the formation of Christian families as a solution to poverty. Marvin Olasky's 1992 book *The Tragedy of American Compassion* states "Today's poor in the United States are the victims and perpetrators of illegitimacy and abandonment, family non-formation and malformation, alienation and loneliness and much else—but they are not suffering thirst, hunger, or nakedness, except by choice, insanity, or parental abuse" (as quoted in Walsh 2000).

Conservative Christians struggled to respond to the claims of Catholic and progressive activists, who argued that, because welfare provided a way for struggling single mothers to take care of children, it results in decreased abortion rates. At the beginning of

the battle over welfare reform in 1995, James Smith, director of government relations of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, told *The Washington Post* that “You have competing social policy desires here: discouraging illegitimacy and at the same time not encouraging abortion” (Goodstein 1995C). Richard Land of the SBC’s Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission told *The New York Times* in 1995 that “we are going to do our best to have our cake and eat it too” referring to supporting welfare cuts which discourage illegitimacy without encouraging abortion (Lewan 1995A). Yet the Southern Baptist Convention, though a pillar of the conservative evangelical establishment, did not take a position on welfare reform. Father Robert Cirico, a Catholic priest who testified before Congress on behalf of the Acton Institute, by contrast, disputed statistics used by Catholic and progressive activists. Cirico argued that welfare does not cause abortion rates to go down because few women make the decision to have abortions based on whether they receive welfare benefits, and cutting welfare may in fact cause abortion rates to go down because those who would then be forced to find work may behave in ways that do not result in pregnancies that they do not wish to bring to term (Contract with America and Welfare Reform 1995, Contract with the American Family 1995).

The Christian Coalition also supported the relatively bipartisan Earned Income Tax Credit, but displayed its economically very conservative ideology by supporting the family cap plan which was criticized even by many conservative and pro-life activists. Whereas the Christian Coalition provided significant arguments based on cost controls to justify opposition to health care reform, much of the work of the religious right in support of welfare reform was based on opposing out-of-wedlock pregnancies, along with highlighting other allegedly bad effects on the poor themselves. Other scholarship has noted the

narrowness of Christian conservative lobbying in support of reform, as compared to progressive lobbying against reform. While its relationship with some politicians in the Republican Party was strong, Hayes (2001) notes that the Christian Coalition and other proponents of reform lobbied Congress less than did the opponents of reform proposals. Rosenfeld (1995) profiled Andrea Sheldon of the Traditional Values Coalition as the counterpart of Sharon Daley on the pro-reform religious side. Heidi Stirrip of the Christian Coalition testified at a February 1996 hearing of the Senate Finance committee on the Governors' Association welfare proposal. Sheldon and Stirrip both testified at the March 1996 House Human Resources hearing on poverty and illegitimacy, arguing that there is a positive correlation between welfare benefits and illegitimacy.

After Welfare Reform

Mainline, Catholic and evangelical politics surrounding welfare continued to be informed largely by their networks of charitable agencies. To be sure, the goals of these charities were driven partially by theological considerations. While mainline and Catholic charities continued to advocate for increased welfare, evangelical charities advocated for faith-based partnerships.

The National Council of Churches, as a body of denominations interested in social justice, put forward a significant effort to take control of interfaith and mainline public policy priorities after the 1996 elections. Joan Brown Campbell spearheaded a National Religious Leaders summit, including Catholics, which set fighting poverty, including challenges to welfare reform, as the first priority (Tipton 2007).

The National Council of Churches and Evangelical Lutheran Church released surveys about congregational attitudes to welfare reform, but the results were released too

late to be usable in policy debates over legislation (Walsh 2000). But broad denominational lobbying soon gave way to the efforts of charitable agencies. The Clinton administration sought to encourage churches to help poor people newly off welfare to find jobs, though mainline denominations largely rebuffed them. In the late 1990s, a broad coalition of religious groups came together at the federal level but with the primary task of coordinating activity on state and local poverty policy. The group included not only representatives of the Catholic hierarchy, the National Council of Churches and Sojourners, but also the National Association of Evangelicals, Salvation Army and Family Research Council. This group finally began working together at the federal level in 2009, and later (though without the Family Research Council) formed the Circle of Protection. The group agreed to ask the governors of all 50 states for information about state implementation of welfare reform (Murphy 1997). The Christian Coalition was invited but did not attend. Meanwhile, the Interfaith Alliance, a group set up to counteract the Christian Coalition in 1997 and prioritized welfare policy as an issue, developed chapters in most states by 2004 (Tipton 2007). This local activism, as summarized by Tipton, appeared to be focused on mobilizing congregations in each state to fight state level welfare cuts, while also providing networks for religious charitable institutions which could support both private charitable efforts and governmental lobbying.

Catholic Charities, especially its lobbyist Sharon Daly, took the lead in congressional hearing testimony on the effects of welfare reform, especially shortly after the 1996 presidential elections (President's Fiscal Year 1998 1997; Child Welfare 1997) and in 2001, when Daly presented data about the mixed results of welfare reform as Congress began to consider reauthorization (Making Ends Meet 2001; Strengthening Working Families Act

2001). For the most part, during the 2000 election and the beginning of the Bush administration, debate on welfare turned to ways in which religious organizations could enter into stronger partnerships with government because of the Charitable Choice provision. Mainline leaders always took the opportunity to express concerns both about cuts to welfare programs and separation of church and state, but leaders of the black Protestant churches were more supportive of Bush's campaign for faith-based initiatives (Bartkowski and Regis 2003; Wuthnow 2004; Tipton 2007).

Denominational lobbying returned to the forefront, however, as the Temporary Aid to Needy Families program came up for revision; mainline and Catholic administrative bodies sought a place for themselves as interest groups with information and expertise. Congress was expected to reauthorize TANF in 2002, but worked with emergency extensions until 2005. The NCC began working on the reauthorization campaign over a year before the original 2002 deadline. In February 2001 it released a survey to examine whether welfare reform reduced poverty. It found that the lifetime limits created more poverty, especially for children (Tipton 2007). A congressional hearing of the Human Resources Subcommittee of the House ways and Means Committee on April 11, 2002, provides a good comparison of both the beliefs and actions of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops and the National Council of Churches. Kathleen Curran, spokeswoman for the USCCB, was followed by Brenda Gurton Mitchell, policy advisor for the National Council of Churches. The panel also included a representative from Network Catholic Social Justice Lobby, the public policy director of the progressive evangelical group Call to Renewal, and representatives of the Unitarian and Reformed Jewish denominations. All of these groups advocated expansion of TANF, based on their social teachings and hands-on experience

working with the poor. The USCCB and National Council of Churches reiterated their stances from the 1995/96 welfare reform debate, arguing that more needed to be done to help the working poor and those who were still not able to work, a situation which left them even more destitute when their benefits expired.

Both the USCCB and NCC advocated that poverty reduction rather than welfare reduction should be the goal. Both advocated for expanded child care grants, so that working parents would not have to spend most of their salaries on child care, leaving them poorer. They also stated that some caregivers should be able to receive benefits even while not working, that states should be able to expand the flexibility of the timing of work requirements, and that education and vocational training should be incentivized. The Catholic Bishops provided more detailed proposals and emphasized the prioritization of marriage and family, which the NCC again avoided. The Catholic Bishops again stated that single-parent families should not be discriminated against, but that two-parent families should be incentivized.

Throughout the long reauthorization fight, the NCC continued to take action by sponsoring conferences, rallies, meeting with legislatures and letter writing campaigns. (NCC News, 2004). Mainline Protestants and Bread for the World (Eckstrom 2002) and the Catholic bishops and Network Catholic Social Justice Lobby (Feuerherd 2002) were particularly active in lobbying when TANF's funding expired in October 2002; the program was kept funded by emergency spending. Religious lobbyists supported Senate versions of reauthorization which provided more funding for day care and job training, while opposing House proposals which would make work requirements more stringent while cutting funding.

The Republican victory in the 2002 elections and the beginning of the Iraq War in 2003 limited the attention of Congress and lobbyists on TANF, but did not deter religious lobbying on the issue. In June 2003, Maryland representative Ben Cardin (Democrat) read a letter from religious leaders calling for TANF reauthorization and expansion on the House floor. The National Council of Churches also sent letters and lobbied Congress to protect Earned Income Tax Credits from budget cuts (Firestone 2003). Most notably, a letter by the NCC's Bob Edgar on the feast of Pentecost in 2003 linked spending on the Iraq War, tax cuts for the rich, and an over-reliance on faith-based charities to argue that the government can certainly afford stronger and more just welfare programs (Tipton 2007). Progressive religious activists had long sought to frame the failure to take care of the poor as a choice to benefit the military and the rich, but this rhetorical attempt to use the Iraq War and recent tax cuts did not lead to a significant long-term re-mobilization of progressive anti-poverty action, nor was any congressional action taken. In April 2004, when Catholic, mainline Protestant and black Protestant clergy held a joint meeting at the White House which focused on international poverty, there was also discussion of domestic poverty (Feuerherd 2004). Kathleen Curran of the USCCB testified before a congressional hearing again on February 10, 2005.

TANF reauthorization finally passed in 2005. Republicans, now at the height of their power in Congress and with Bush beginning his second term, sought to privatize social security and pass budget cuts to social programs. While there is little evidence of religious lobbying on social security since the 1980s, the Catholic Bishops released a "social security backgrounder," a document discussing the importance of the program. Twice during 2005, Connecticut congresswoman Rosa DeLauro (Democrat, Catholic) read letters from religious

leaders opposing budget cuts to welfare programs. In March, she read a letter from the leaders of the Episcopal, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregationalist mainline denominations. In December 2005 she read a letter from the Catholic bishops. This letter coincided with an effort by Sojourners and other religious groups, protested at the Cannon house office building during budget negotiations (Weissman and Cooperman 2005). In July 2006, the five largest mainline denominations again sent letters to Congress and held press conferences (Johnson 2006).

There is less evidence of religious lobbying on welfare policy during the period of Democratic control of Congress between 2007 and 2011. The efforts to pass a federal minimum wage, followed by the NCC's decision to scale back its general lobbying efforts, limited movement on welfare policy during the election campaign, the fast-moving legislative processes of the financial crisis and the first days of the Obama administration, and the prioritization of religious and most other lobbyists on health care reform until the middle of 2010, arguably provided little room for such efforts. The reauthorization of TANF during budget negotiations in 2010 did not lend itself to the tactics of congressional hearing testimony, letter writing and social protest which largely sustains mainline lobbying, and the Catholic approach of more focused lobbying on the issues of highest priority also did not make lobbying on welfare likely during these years.

The Evangelical Reevaluation of Welfare

Meanwhile, between the first years of the Bush administration and the first years of the Obama administration, the National Association of Evangelicals and a few other moderately conservative evangelical organizations became more open to supporting and even lobbying for welfare programs. The NAE's 2004 document For the Health of the

Nation noted that while the Bible does not mandate economic equality, it condemns “disparities in opportunity and outcome that cause suffering and perpetuate the cycle of poverty.” While the document is most interested in promoting action by evangelical churches, it also noted that government has a role in addressing all of the problems listed in the document.

It is surprising that this change in attitude occurred near the height of the relationship between the Christian Right and the Republican Party. Public opinion does not appear to be a factor. To be sure, not all religious conservatives maintained strict economic conservatism. Putnam and Campbell (2010)’s analysis of the General Social Survey over time since 1976 argued that religious identity is not an important factor in people’s views of welfare. Wuthnow (2004) notes that nearly a majority of self-described religious conservatives support welfare spending, although the category of religious conservatism is distinct from evangelicalism.

However, when examining the General Social Survey data provided by Putnam and Campbell, there is a gradual shift during the 1990s and early 2000s of evangelicals moving toward opposition of welfare policy and a more modest movement of mainline Protestants in favor of welfare policy, so that mainline Protestants became virtually split on the question, while somewhere between 35% and 40% of evangelicals continued to support increased social welfare. A question beyond the scope of this research is whether this change occurred because of conservative mainliners moving increasingly toward identifying as evangelicals, or because of changes in attitudes of those who remained in the same group.

Significant dissatisfaction with the Bush administration and the Republican Party regarding the politics of faith-based organizations may have been a factor (DiIulio 2003),

enough so that by 2004, the NAE was willing to promote a document as moderate as *For the Health of the Nation*. David Kuo's 2006 book *Tempting Faith* describes how some fiscal conservatives in the Bush administration marginalized the office of faith-based and neighborhood partnerships, repeatedly disparaging its religious constituency. This, combined with opposition from some liberals, limited the number and type of grants given to faith-based organizations compared to what was initially promised. Kuo reluctantly included that the government's ability to direct funds to churches was questionable, and that programs to assist the poor regardless of their participation in church-related program were quite necessary.

Another significant factor appears to be little-known precursors to the Circle of Protection, which began as early as 1998 to involve conservative evangelical associations with discussions on poverty with more liberal groups, as discussed above. As analyzed by Schafer (2012) and discussed in Chapter 2 of this project, as evangelical charities continued to expand partnerships with government officials, moderate evangelicals who had previously identified with the Christian Right began to gain an appreciation for governmental efforts to solve poverty. To be sure, other conservative Christians continued to be suspicious of state power over economic and welfare matters, and argued that government at all levels should largely limit itself to supporting local charitable partnerships and pursue cutting taxes. However, even some of the most conservative evangelical leaders proved willing to dialogue with other religious leaders. The issue of Earned Income Tax Credits, which religious leaders across the political spectrum agreed on for differing reasons, was a worthy starting point. Because involvement in charitable work was common to liberal, moderate and

conservative religious leaders, the political result of their meetings was largely to form arguments based on the interests of religious charities.

In February 2009, the Poverty Forum, co-chaired by progressive evangelical Jim Wallis and conservative evangelical Michael Gerson, agreed on a set of anti-poverty policies which did not discuss welfare or food stamp programs but did discuss expanded income tax credits (Popovici 2009). The forum included representatives of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, the National Council of Churches, Wallis ally Ronald Cyder of Evangelicals for Social Action, and even the right-wing Family Research Council. *The National Catholic Reporter* stated that the Obama administration planned to meet with Forum participants. From the perspective of religious progressives and moderates, as with efforts to raise the minimum wage discussed in the previous chapters, the new efforts to form a coalition on tax credits (reminiscent of the FAP debates in the 1970s) signified efforts to continue the anti-poverty fight despite the lack of progress on rolling back welfare reform.

Why did some right-wing groups like the Southern Baptist Convention and Family Research Council either avoid such dialogue entirely, or end cooperation when the Circle of Protection formed to bring out broad-based religious support for anti-poverty programs? Given the limited support of progressive economic policies among evangelical clergy and members of the public, the theological and practical consensus established by progressives such as Jim Wallis and moderate Republicans such as Michael Gerson and the leadership of the National Association of Evangelicals failed to transfer to evangelical organizations with a more significant commitment to conservative economics. The Southern Baptist Convention, with its takeover by a conservative faction and long-standing concern about

government overreach in what may appear to them to be the Church's responsibility to conduct charity, could be expected to be one of the organizations that refused to go along with the change in evangelical thinking. Yet its previous moderate stance on welfare from the middle of the twentieth century remained influential enough on the organization that it did not outright oppose the Circle of Protection.

The Circle of Protection: Protecting SNAP and TANF in the Debt Ceiling Debate

The Circle of Protection formed in 2011 in reaction to the Republican takeover of the House of Representatives and their threats to cut social programs, including reductions to TANF, SNAP, affordable housing and Head Start (early childhood education) but also the widely popular Earned Income and child Tax Credit programs. In addition to being consolidated by a broad-based religious coalition, the fight to protect remaining welfare programs from cuts in 2011 differed from the fight against welfare reform in its rhetoric and its lobbying tactics. In terms of rhetoric, as during welfare reform there was still an emphasis on moral exhortations, and reminders that charitable institutions could not replace government programs. However, there was more focus on defending the Earned Income Tax Credit and on finding other ways to decrease the national debt can be explained both by the political situation more broadly, and because such rhetoric would be more acceptable to conservative evangelicals. The defense of religious progressives and moderates regarding the Earned Income Tax Credit was unprecedented, but their activity in favor of EITC was primarily in conjunction with their support of other programs for the poor. References to the national debt appear in the Circle of Protection's founding statement, when they rarely appear in statements by the National Council of Churches or US Conference of Catholic Bishops. More surprising, perhaps, is that despite the presence of pro-life evangelicals in the

coalition, there was little attempt to highlight issues of family stability and the likelihood that low-income mothers might be more likely to have abortions without governmental programs; a concern that had been promoted by Catholic bishops during the Clinton administration. This can, perhaps, be explained by the fact that Republicans were not attempting to strengthen family caps in welfare programs; thus, this was not a basis to persuade moderate Republicans.

In terms of lobbying tactics, there were fewer efforts to highlight the work of religious groups as charitable institutions, or to work in coalition with secular charities and advocacy groups. This is despite the fact that religious charity leaders such as the directors of Catholic Charities and Bread for the World, or those closely associated with charitable work such as Sojourners, had been instrumental in putting the Circle of Protection together. Part of the explanation is that the Circle of Protection's most significant work came at a time of legislative crisis over a matter of weeks, rather than a sustained period of committee hearings over nearly an entire Congress as had been in the case during welfare reform. There were acts of social protests over the preceding months before the early August 2011 deal which temporarily resolved the crisis, but according to the Circle of Protection's own press releases, and media accounts from the time period, the group's interventions were most critical during meetings with congressional leaders during the height of the crisis. Just as importantly, though, the Circle of Protection's image as a coalition of denominations and religious charities tested the ability of progressive religious groups to look at opportunities for influence. It became clear that, in the political context of 2011, progressive groups like the National Council of Churches could be more influential alongside moderate evangelicals than alongside the Children's Defense Fund.

The Catholic Church began its independent lobbying as soon as it became clear that Republicans would likely gain control of at least one House of Congress. The Bishops' Committee on Domestic Justice sent two letters to Congress urging protections for earned income and child tax credits, one before the midterm elections in September 2010 and one after the elections in December 2010. In February 2011, John Carr, still serving as Director of the Bishops' Committee on Domestic Justice, led the annual Catholic social ministry gathering in Washington DC. It included a keynote address by Cardinal Peter Turkson of Ghana, President of the Pontifical Council on Justice and Peace, who discussed *Rerum Novarum* and Catholic social teaching. While the gathering usually included visits to Congress to lobby for social programs, Carr noted that this year's gathering was particularly important because of the likelihood that Republicans would push for budget cuts. However, he also accused Democrats of failing to protect the poor, positioning the church as being more progressive on funding for social programs than President Obama. He noted that social programs were a disproportionately large share of government spending cuts in budget proposals of both parties. Meanwhile, those visiting members of Congress were instructed to lobby both for social programs and against abortion coverage in health care (Filteau and Stangler 2011).

Evangelicals, meanwhile, worked to develop a proposal to deal with the national debt. The moderate think tank Center for Public Justice worked with several evangelical college administrators and pastors to draft a "Call for Intergenerational Justice" which received coverage from the Christian Post in March 2011 (Samuel 2011). The proposal called for cuts in corporate welfare, agricultural subsidies and defense spending. These ideas were not new, even to evangelicals; Tipton (2007) describes how Jim Wallis and Sojourners

had supported most of them as a part of Interfaith Impact in the 1980s. The Call for Intergenerational Justice, however, highlighted interest in dealing with poverty and the national debt at the same time among a broader segment of evangelical.

The first ecumenical actions after the beginning of the new Congress took advantage of the symbolism of the season of Lent, and involved tactics of social protest. In March 2011, about 4000 activists undertook a fast to protest congressional proposals to cut welfare spending, with a symbolic ending on Easter Sunday. 28 congressional Democrats joined the fast, as did contributors to *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, who interviewed David Beckman and Tony Hall, respectively (Bittman 2011; Marshall 2011). No immediate action was taken by Congress on proposed budget cuts.

Of more substantial importance, in July 2011, members of the Circle of Protection, including Jim Wallis of the progressive evangelical group Sojourners, met with President Obama for 40 minutes. They also met with congressional leaders including Senate majority leader Harry Reid, House Budget committee chair Paul Ryan, and top aides to the Speaker of the House. *The Washington Post* reported that they specifically called on Obama and congressional leaders to protect food stamps and aid to mothers with newborn children. They also ran ads in the districts of congressional leaders, including local pastors from those districts (Wallsten 2011). Galen Carey of the National Association of Evangelicals claimed that most of the meetings ended with acknowledgement of the group's points, though with no explicit commitment (Kamen 2011). Boorstein (2011), profiling prayer meetings held daily by religious progressives at the United Methodist Building, noted statements from lobbyists implying that advocacy on behalf of programs for the poor was at a significantly higher level than any recent time.

Lobbyists for the Catholic bishops and Bread for the World argued that their activism was essential to the successful efforts which exempted many programs to protect the poor from cuts when a compromise was reached to increase the debt limit (Carr 2011; Ryan 2012). John Carr of the Conference of Catholic Bishops called the Circle of Protection's access to the President and congressional leaders of both parties "unprecedented." He noted that protection of programs for the poor was among the last items agreed to by the President and Congress. Carr stated that the diversity of the Circle of Protection, particular efforts of the Catholic Bishops to write additional letters, send lobbyists and distribute action alerts, and the scale of the crisis, contributed to their ability to be effective.

Having successfully played a part in the effort to hold off the most severe cuts to welfare programs, the Circle of Protection could not maintain the same level of commitment from activists during the succeeding presidential election cycle. The US Conference of Catholic Bishops and Bread for the World, both instrumental in the Circle of Protection, took the lead in criticizing Republican arguments on the federal budget as related to social programs. The USCCB was able to gain media attention because of its conflict with practicing Catholic Paul Ryan and the efforts of a group of nuns, while Bread for the World was able to use its network of congregations already interested in progressive economic issues to provide assistance to such efforts.

In early March 2012, the Catholic Bishops wrote a letter to the President and Congress addressing President Obama's budget proposal. It criticized a proposal to increase rent for those receiving federal housing assistance. Bread for the World urged its congregations to write letters on four different poverty programs; the two domestic poverty

programs assigned to some congregations were nutrition assistance and Earned Income Tax Credits (Ryan 2012).

The National Catholic Reporter quoted religious activists as saying that they were gearing up for a difficult year, and their predictions soon came true as Congressman Paul Ryan's budget proposal, presented as a long-term solution for deficits, passed the House. It included tax cuts across the board (though some tax credits for the poor were endangered), spending cuts for social programs, and increases for military spending. It generated religious opposition by the Circle of Protection, and, independently, from the US Conference of Catholic Bishops. Most media accounts focused on Ryan's Catholicism in these discussions (e.g. Kim 2012). Speaker John Boehner, also a Catholic, responded to the Bishops by urging them to take a "new look," alleging that "if we don't make these decisions, these programs won't exist, and then they'll really have something to worry about" (Weissman 2012). In an interview with the Christian Broadcasting Network, Ryan stated that his Catholic faith motivated his politics, arguing that Catholic social teaching's most important goal is to keep people out of poverty by motivating them to be better citizens and harder workers, and that government programs defeat these goals by creating dependency and increasing the national debt. Progressive Catholics and the Catholic bishops made appeals to Ryan based on Christian moral criteria to protect the least of these, and specifically Catholic social doctrine. The US Conference of Catholic Bishops wrote a series of letters to Congress and specific congressional committees in March and April, criticizing proposed budget cuts to SNAP, tax credits and housing assistance. The letters generated coverage from *The New York Times* and *The Hill*, which noted that the Bishops criticized Republican proposals on poverty even as they clashed with the Obama administration on contraception mandates in health care

(Firestone 2012; Easley 2012). Easley (2012) noted that the Bishops suggested cutting subsidies to large agribusinesses as a possible place for spending cuts, as had been suggested by the evangelical Center for Public Justice as part of their proposal for dealing with the debt the previous year.

As the presidential election campaign continued, a group of nuns led by Simone Campbell of Network Catholic Social Justice Lobby traveled the country in a “nuns on the bus” tour, with a message focusing on protecting programs for the poor. The tour ended with a rally at the US Capitol (Lisee 2012). The Catholic bishops and Protestant denominations, including Sojourners and Bread for the World, focused on protecting the Earned Income Tax Credit. In late July, they sent letters to Congress attacking a Republican tax bill which would cut the EITC and retain tax cuts for the wealthy (Lisee 2012B). After Paul Ryan became the Republican vice-presidential candidate in August, interest in the conflict between Ryan and his Catholic critics over the budget increased (e.g. Hennessey and Muscatine 2012; Blow 2012), and Sister Simone Campbell gave a speech to the Democratic convention criticizing the Ryan budget. The Bishops’ 2012 Labor Day statement focused particularly on the necessity of programs to support the poor.

After the election, the Catholic bishops and Circle of Protection sent letters to Congress in December expressing similar principles as usual, regarding negotiations over the fiscal cliff, and in February 2013, the Circle of Protection sent more letters to the President and Congress arguing for a “thoughtful approach” to deficit reduction (Shear 2013). Jim Wallis told *The New York Times* that “the unity of the faith community is clear.”

In the spring of 2013, after spending cuts caused by sequestration following fiscal cliff negotiations, Ryan’s next budget proposal was criticized by the Catholic Bishops.

Bishop Stephen Blair of the Domestic Justice Committee was joined by Bishop Richard Pates of the International Justice Committee in a letter to Congress. Among Ryan's suggestions was turning SNAP into block grants for the states, as had nearly been done in 1996. Continuing to use the "Circle of Protection" slogan, The Bishops called on Congress to protect SNAP, also mentioning TANF, tax credits, and Supplemental Security Income as essential programs. It also expressed concerns that Democratic Senate budget proposals were not detailed enough (Sadowski 2013; Easley 2013).

The Circle of Protection continued to be a durable lobbying group as debt ceiling battles caused a government shutdown in October 2013, but this time, there appeared to be fewer high-profile meetings with congressional leaders. Its members led a "faithful filibuster", protesting at the Capitol and reading scriptures which have a social justice message. One event, which received coverage from *The Washington Post*, included speeches by Beckman, Wallis, and representatives of the Catholic Bishops Office of Social Development and the NAE's political director. This strategy marked a return to tactics of social protest which leaders had admitted previously were limited in their effectiveness (Burgiss 2013). The protests continued for days, as spokespeople read thousands of bible verses, but they appeared to have little influence on the crisis's resolution. However, the effort showed that the Catholic Bishops and NAE as institutions were as committed as the mainline Protestants and other progressive leaders to participation and, more importantly leadership, in the Circle of Protection. In December 2013, David Beckman of Bread for the World and Larry Snyder of Catholic Charities co-authored an op-ed for *The Washington Post*, reiterating the necessity of governmental programs given that religious charities cannot provide comprehensive assistance. They argued against food stamp cuts, stating "These

recent cuts to SNAP eliminate more meals than what Catholic Charities, churches, food pantries, and all other charities combined are able to provide with our already stretched resources. Churches and food pantries would need to more than double what they raise to fill the gap left by Congress' cuts to SNAP" (Beckman and Snyder 2013).

The Republican victory in the 2014 elections has resulted in little movement on legislation related to programs for the poor (*The Washington Post* Editorial Board 2015). While Republicans now control both houses of Congress, and have blocked increased funding for social programs, they have not launched a wholesale attack on the remains of the federal welfare system. The Circle of Protection has continued to operate through the Washington offices of its organizations. Its most high-profile activity in 2015, however, has been soliciting videos from presidential candidates in the Democratic and Republican primaries (Rotandaro 2015). With the notable exception of Donald Trump, most candidates have made submissions, although many of them are lacking in policy details.

Conclusion

This chapter has described how Catholic and mainline lobbyists have devoted significant attention to lobbying against cuts to welfare programs, and have generally advocated for social spending to protect the social safety net to increase. They have also supported programs to stimulate employment. They have been required to respond to concerns about welfare diminishing incentives for work and family formation. The Catholic Church has particularly advocated for welfare to be equally available to two-parent families, but the primary response of both Catholic and mainline churches has been to argue that the government has a moral duty to provide basic necessities, and to explain why churches cannot provide these services alone. While religious advocates for the poor have sought to

build an interfaith coalition advocating for a moral budget, especially when welfare programs are under threat, their most significant influence has usually been based on churches' practical expertise on narrowly defined legislative battles. Two key examples are the interfaith battle to protect the food stamp program, and the efforts of the Catholic Bishops to mitigate family cap mandates during welfare reform in the 1990s. These efforts were part of widespread religious advocacy on economic justice. Members of Congress, however, appeared attentive to religious arguments primarily because of their demonstrations of expertise on poverty, and, in the case of Catholic bishops, their integration of opposition to abortion and economic justice. Religious organizations which argue for an economically conservative agenda, meanwhile, have often avoided lobbying in favor of welfare cuts at the denominational level, and some organizations in the evangelical establishment, such as the National Association of Evangelicals, have recently broken from the Christian Right to support protections for the social safety net. Religious groups are most likely to unite on the issue of the Earned Income Tax Credit, which is primarily protection for the working poor and, unlike the minimum wage, does not include regulations of businesses. Religious groups have devoted more substantial attention to income tax credits in recent years because it has been under threat in Republican budgets.

While religious lobbying on welfare policy continues to be supported by mainline, black Protestant, Catholic, and more recently some evangelical groups, its strength and effectiveness has been limited by their difficulty in achieving sustained public support from within denominations. While some grassroots efforts have been tried, they are usually short-lived. The parish level activism on federal welfare issues by Catholics is minor compared to Catholic support of the grassroots pro-life movement. Mainline Protestant denominations,

meanwhile, are still afflicted by the gap between liberal leaderships and moderate and conservative factions in the laity, which are apathetic or opposed to their lobbying on welfare. Politicians, having little interest in moral exhortations by churches, and little indication that church lobbying is supported by broad sectors within voters belonging to most of the denominations, still do acknowledge the expertise of religious groups who work with the poor. To the extent that evangelical charities begin to join their mainline and Catholic counterparts in arguing not only for government partnerships, but also expansions in the government-run social safety net, it is possible that religious lobbying in favor of welfare will increase.

Chapter 5: Minimum Wage

Minimum wage laws in the United States prohibit employers from paying their workers below a certain amount. Since the adoption of a federal minimum wage of 25 cents in 1938, it has been increased periodically because of inflation, cost of living increases, and as an effort at poverty reduction which does not require direct government assistance to the poor. These considerations have, at least until recently, made the minimum wage a less polarized issue as compared to welfare reform and health care reform. This chapter will begin by summarizing the legislative history of the minimum wage, and public opinion. I explain the arguments religious supporters of the minimum wage make, combining morality, economics and expertise. I then explain how the movement for local and state minimum wages has resulted in state minimum wages that are above the federal.

The analysis of this chapter will, in some ways, be less complex than that of other chapters because there is little religious opposition to the minimum wage. The major reasons for religious conservatives to oppose other initiatives are barely applicable to the minimum wage. Social issues such as abortion are hardly a factor; Snarr (2011) describes a few examples of Catholic congregations hesitating to work with local coalitions involving Planned Parenthood, but she does not argue that this is widespread. More importantly, the minimum wage is a regulation rather than a large government program, and is a program only directly benefiting those who are employed. Thus, there is less ability for the Religious Right to accuse it of failing to incentivize hard work or of costing too much. To be sure, there has been a growing reluctance by Republicans in Congress to index federal programs such as the minimum wage to inflation for cost of living increases, and to update programs such as the minimum wage which are not indexed, particularly beginning with the Reagan

Administration (McCarty 2007). However, whereas the Christian Right contributed to Republican welfare efforts, and right-wing efforts to oppose health care reform, there is little to no evidence that the Christian Right contributed to the Republicans' rightward drift on the particular issue of the minimum wage.

There are some obstacles for religious advocates of the minimum wage to overcome, however. Religious leaders are open to questions about why they have expertise in wage policy. I show how charitable agencies can make a case for the minimum wage based on their interactions with the working poor, who must still go to them for support because of low wages. But unlike welfare and health care, the message of social justice is paramount in minimum wage debates, with the expertise of charitable agencies clearly supplementary in advocacy work.

By examining the impact of national coalitions like Let Justice Roll and Interfaith Worker Justice, this chapter describes how religious living wage advocates working in local communities must build bridges between faiths and with secular groups. At the national level, there was some distrust between religious groups and unions which may have limited their participation in living wage movements in previous decades. Two articles from the late 1990s suggest that the National Council of Churches antagonized the AFLCIO and other labor unions from the left as the NCC supported socialist rebels in Latin America during the 1980s. The end of the Cold War and new leadership in the AFLCIO had eased these tensions. Additionally, religious groups had previously focused on other issues; civil rights and the anti-war movement in the case of the National Council of Churches, relying on labor unions to take the lead on advocacy for economic issues. With the organized labor movement struggling against decline, churches might see the need to take up the slack, and

their common interests became instrumental in the development of local living wage movements (Greenhouse 1996). Part of the renewed religious activism can be attributed to outreach by AFLCIO director John Sweeney, a devout Catholic who was elected in 1995 on a reform slate (Kazin 1999). Snarr and others point out that as union representation continues to fall, unions have even more incentive to seek coalition partners with whom they had not previously worked or had not worked with recently in order to maintain their political clout, and religious groups are among these partners. Religious groups can particularly open doors for community groups in regions such as the South where unions are not as powerful.

Local communities have been able to maintain relationships with unions, but they must do so by volunteering their time to establish connections, without the training and tools of professional lobbyists. When such arrangements work, however, they can lead to the most impactful social movements described in this projects. In Arkansas, for example, a mainline pastor has led a coalition of religious groups and labor unions which has successfully helped get minimum wage increases twice, in 2006 and 2014.

Legislative History

The national minimum wage in the United States was implemented in the late stages of the New Deal, as part of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938. The minimum wage is not indexed to inflation. Therefore, until the 1980s, legislation often provided for minimum wage increases in multi-year stages so that increases happened quite often. Minimum wage increases have been passed in 1949, 1955, 1966, 1974, 1977, 1989, 1996 and 2007. Many of

the earlier minimum wage increases made a more significant effort to insure that minimum wage increases were in line with inflation (Waltman 2011).¹⁴

Following the increase of the Minimum Wage to \$5.15 as passed by Congress in 1996, which took effect in 1997, the Federal Minimum Wage went through its longest period without an increase, until Congress passed an increase to \$7.25 after the Democrats took control in 2007 (Bartels 2008, Chapter 8).

Some economists have argued that raising the minimum wage is likely to increase unemployment, and these arguments are often accepted by corporate interest groups, who work to strengthen the Republican Party's opposition to minimum wage increases. A few conservative Catholic and Calvinist commentators have gone along with this movement, arguing that religious business owners may be affected (Archbold 2014; Balure 2014). Opposition, however, is limited by the significant economic evidence that minimum wage increases do not cause unemployment increases, especially the research of Card and Krueger (1995), comparing state minimum wages and employment in fast food restaurants (Bartels 2008).¹⁵ In general, for the last several decades the Democratic Party has endorsed significant increases in the Minimum Wage, while Republicans "go along infrequently and reluctantly." (Bartels 2008, 188). Republicans are generally more willing to support smaller increases in the Minimum Wage. Republicans and some Democrats argue that the Earned Income Tax Credit, which will be discussed further in the chapter on welfare reform, is a

¹⁴ The history of the federal minimum wage is documented in several books, including Nordlund (1997), Bartels (2008), and Waltman (2011).

¹⁵ Card and Krueger have conducted follow-up studies since their landmark 1995 publication. Bartels (2008) summarizes the economic argument that small minimum wage increases do not cause increased unemployment.

more economically efficient way to insure that the working poor have higher incomes (Bartels 2008).

The fight to raise the Minimum Wage is an instructive case study for analysis of the partisan landscape. In 1977, the Carter administration and a Democratic congress passed minimum wage increases which would continue through 1981. Congress almost succeeded in having the minimum wage indexed to inflation, but an effort led by Republicans defeated this proposal in committee (Krehbiel and Rivers 1988). The Reagan administration was opposed to any increase in the minimum wage and was able to block it successfully, which began a decline in the real value of the minimum wage.¹⁶ In April 1989, the House of Representatives and Senate passed a minimum wage increase to \$4.55. 24 House Democrats and two Senate Democrats voted against, mostly from the South. 22 House Republicans and 10 Senate Republicans voted in favor (Rasky 1989, Senate Role Call 1989). President George H.W. Bush vetoed the bill. Though he had promised a minimum wage increase, which had not been passed during the entire Reagan administration, he argued that it should not be implemented without a subminimum wage allowed for teenagers and other workers likely to be in training. In November 1989, Congress passed a smaller minimum wage increase to \$4.25 by a wide margin including the support of most Republicans. It was signed by President Bush (Raum 1989). In 1996, all Democrats voted for the minimum wage increase along with 93 House Republicans and 20 Senate Republicans. The 1996 minimum wage increase was a significant victory for President Clinton in a Republican Congress, in a compromise by which Democrats agreed to support tax breaks for small businesses (Clymer 1996, Hill 1996).

¹⁶ A wide variety of academic works address this development, including Bartels (2008), Snarr (2011), and Waltman (2011).

In 2007, all Democrats voted for the Minimum Wage increase in all votes. In the initial House vote, 82 House Republicans voted in favor. Five Senate Republicans voted in favor of the initial cloture, not enough to defeat the demands of President Bush and congressional Republicans for the minimum wage to be passed along with other legislation. The Minimum Wage was later agreed to overwhelmingly as an amendment to a war spending bill which included various domestic spending and, as in 1996, tax breaks for small businesses (Hulce 2007, Senate Role Call 2007, Zapin 2007).

Congressional roll call votes cannot easily articulate the position of the political parties on the minimum wage, because they can change depending on the specifics of the proposal, what else is in the bill besides the minimum wage increase, and other political considerations. However, it can be determined that most Democratic opposition to minimum wage increases has disappeared since the 1980s. However, Republicans generally support smaller increases, more exemptions, and more adoption of their own policy goals in exchange for agreeing to the minimum wage. Since nearly all Democratic politicians are in favor of the Minimum Wage, it is no surprise that most religious organizations associated with liberal politics are in favor of Minimum Wage increases.

Public Opinion

Public opinion in favor of the Minimum Wage has been consistently positive over time. As of 2008, over 80% of those surveyed favor at least some minimum wage increases in nearly every poll, and over 60% favor even large minimum wage increases. Additionally, nearly 2/3 of Republicans favor minimum wage increases (Bartels 2008). Religious efforts to increase the minimum wage such as Let Justice Roll have repeatedly used polling data as

an argument in favor of their views.¹⁷ As will be discussed later, minimum wage increases usually pass when they are put on the ballot as local and state measures. One significant factor in the politics of the minimum wage is that the Minimum Wage is a government regulation rather than a program. It does not directly result in higher taxes or spending. A Public Religion poll in 2013 found that the Minimum Wage still has majority support among Republicans, but about 40% support among those identifying with the Tea Party Movement.

The availability of polling on the minimum wage based on religious identification is limited. However, according to the Public Religion Research Institute, the 2013 American Values Survey indicates that majorities of every religious group support a \$10 minimum wage. This includes 89% of black Protestants, 78% of Catholics and 77% of mainline Protestants. As will be discussed later, these denominations have social teachings in favor of the minimum wage, meaning that most adherents are in line with their denominations on this issue. In the 1980s, evangelicals were even more likely than other Americans to support the minimum wage (Schafer 2012). Evangelicals are now among the least supportive religious groups for minimum wage increases, yet even for this group, a majority (around 60%) are in support (Bellinski 2014). Public opinion in favor of the Minimum Wage even among conservatives may encourage the Catholic Church's support of the minimum wage and neutrality by conservative evangelical organizations. Particularly for the Catholic Church, because the minimum wage has little or no impact on abortion policy, bishops have been able to support it. They can use the issue to gain favor with those Catholics primarily interested in social and economic justice, without compromising their socially conservative values or receiving much backlash from pro-life Catholic organizations.

¹⁷ E.g. Public Religion Research Institute. (2010, October). New Poll: 67 percent support raising minimum wage to \$10. Retrieved from Letjusticeroll.org.

On the other hand, support for the minimum wage, though widespread, is also shallow (Bartels 2008). Members of Congress rarely hear from the public regarding minimum wage increases, and do not claim to vote for candidates strictly based on their minimum wage position. By contrast, when living wage advocates use ballot initiatives where that option is available, soft supporters of the minimum wage can vote for it and increase its chances of passage even though they did not contribute to lobbying of legislators.

Building the Religious Case for a Minimum Wage

As indicated previously, religious groups have not been a significant player in the federal minimum wage debate. However, when religious advocates have testified before Congress, they have articulated clear justifications for the minimum wage that combine social justice with an awareness of economic realities, both the statistics produced by their coalition partners and the experiences of their work with the poor.

In general, most religious advocates of the Minimum Wage tend to use their economic arguments as a necessary tool but focus on the moral obligation of society to protect the poor. As United Church of Christ minister Paul Sherry said at a minimum wage event at the beginning of the Let Justice Roll movement, “Don’t get caught in debating numbers” but emphasize the values of “fairness, hard work, and just wages.” (Snarr 2011, 15). Catholic bishop Stephen Blair’s testimony to a Senate committee in June 2013 echoed this sentiment, stating “I testify before you today not as an economist, a statistician, or a labor market expert, but rather as a pastor and teacher concerned with human development and the protection of human dignity. I will not speak to the specifics of policies, but rather to the conditions that must emerge in society and in the family to make those policies just.” A

letter by Catholic bishop Thomas Wenski representing the US Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on Domestic Justice, and Catholic Charities director Larry Snyder (2014), also states that they are writing as teachers rather than as economists. These moral arguments align with what Hofrening (1995) calls “prophetic lobbying”, where religious groups act primarily by reminding politicians and others of core moral teachings. Instead of starting from the argument that the minimum wage is a beneficial policy, prophetic advocates start their argument from the need to solve the problem of poverty, and then suggest the minimum wage as a step in the right direction.

Religious living wage advocates do, however, supplement their religious appeals with economic arguments. At testimony before a congressional committee in 1987, Archie Lemoen of Interfaith Action for Economic Justice provided specific numbers and percentages of workers whose standard of living had gone down because the minimum wage was not raised to compensate for inflation (Fair Standards Act 1987). Father J. Bryan Hehir, representing the Catholic Bishops as the Secretary of the Department of Social Development and World Peace of the United States Catholic Conference, summarized the Catholic case for the minimum wage in primarily moral terms at testimony for a congressional hearing in 1987. He stated “the way you protect the dignity of the human person in a social setting, is you surround the person with a spectrum of rights, moral claims that a person can make because he or she is a person. Those claims run across a wide variety of needs. But one of the needs is the right to be able to work, and to be able to work in a way that provides decent income so that one can support one's self and one's family. So, our argument really runs from protecting human dignity to the essential nature of the right to a job, and a job that provides adequate income as being essential to the protection of human dignity. And then it

runs from that to an argument that says that the government has some responsibility to see that in a society, that right is protected.” This statement indicates that the minimum wage is not enough on its own to reduce poverty, because not everyone is able to find a job. However, presuming that most people will work if they can find a job, it insures that those who do work will not be in extreme poverty. Heher also quotes Pope John Paul II’s encyclical *Laborem Exercens* (1981), stating that the main test for whether an economic system works is just wages (Fair Labor Standards Act 1987).

Almost two decades later, the inaugural letter to Congress by Let Justice Roll in November 2005 states that minimum wage workers at the time made “\$10,700 a year – \$5,000 below the federal poverty line for a family of three.” The letter also state that “the real value of the minimum wage today is nearly \$4.00 less than it was in 1968.” It additionally cites arguments against the contention that the minimum wage leads to unemployment. This material was also collected in a book (Sklar and Sherry 2005). Some of the most frequent arguments of LJR include the contention that minimum wages do not hurt the economy because poorer people are likely to spend their salary increases, putting the money back into the economy (e.g. Goldberg 2009). Additionally, women are more likely to earn minimum wage jobs. Teenagers also need a minimum wage increase to fund their education.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has also used economic arguments. Wenski and Snyder (2014) state in their letter to Congress that

A full-year, full-time worker making the minimum wage does not make enough money to raise a child free from poverty. Because the minimum wage is a static number and does not change, each year it becomes more difficult for workers

making the minimum wage to survive. Additionally, while some minimum wage workers are teenagers, research suggests as much as 25 percent of workers who would benefit from a minimum wage increase are parents.

One difficult question surrounding the rhetoric of religious groups regarding poverty and the minimum wage is the extent to which theology in favor of the minimum wage is motivated by a general interest in taking care of the poor, or an interest in taking care of hard workers who may be more deserving than those without a job. The Catholic Church's arguments surrounding the minimum wage focus largely on the dignity of work. The progressive religious coalition Let Justice Roll's slogan for the living wage movement; "a job should get you out of poverty, not keep you in it" also refers to work. This question has been dealt with further in the chapter on welfare reform, where I argue that progressive and moderate religious activists do support a safety net for those out of work, particularly for mothers of children. Still, recent activists and scholars are aware of the implications of this question. In 2006, Paul Sherry stated that much else needs to be done including significant welfare programs to help all poor people. However, the Minimum Wage is a simpler regulation which establishes a standard below which no working person should fall. Therefore it achieves more political support.¹⁸ He also stated in an interview with *The Nation* that during the group's previous work in 2004, it became apparent that Minimum Wage increases achieved the most enthusiastic and bipartisan support (Vanden, Heuvel, and Graham-Felson 2007). This indicates that religious activists believe in the economic efficacy of the minimum wage, but their analysis of politics also leads them to focus on the issue.

¹⁸ The Street Spirit, for which Sherry provided this information, is a Quaker website.

Snarr's book also critiques rhetoric in the living wage movement which indicates that the working poor are more deserving of help than the unemployed poor.

Overall, it is clear that the leaderships of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops and the National Council of Churches (especially its mainline and black Protestant denominations), are about equally committed to a theology which holds that workers have a right to a certain standard of living, and that mandating higher wages is a good way to achieve that standard. As discussed in Chapter 2, The American Catholic hierarchy is in line with teachings coming from the Vatican, and mainline Protestants also have historical influences through the social gospel.

Impact on Religious Organizations

One factor which may limit religious activism in favor of the minimum wage, however, is that the minimum wage has less direct impact on religious organizations than other public policies. The chapters on welfare reform and health care reform showed how faith-based service providers have become involved in these policy debates, which include the provision of government funding to such organizations. There are, however, less direct ways in which minimum wage laws might negatively or positively impact religious organizations. Negatively, religious groups are employers, and their running costs may increase because of higher minimum wages. The National Association of Evangelicals' only official action regarding the Minimum Wage was a resolution on the Fair Labor Standards Act in 1958 which called for an exemption for religious volunteers.¹⁹ The Catholic Church

¹⁹ The NAE's Fair Labor Standards Act resolution is not listed on the most accessible list of resolutions from the NAE's website. Along with other older resolutions considered by the NAE to be less relevant, it is available in a Full List of resolutions on a link which the NAE provided upon request.

has at times been accused of failing to pay a living wage to its own employees (e.g. *How the Church Measures Up*, 1997).

On the other hand, recent living wage movements have cited personal work with the poor as a significant factor motivating religious involvement, with the argument that religious charities should not be responsible for feeding the working poor when a relatively simple government regulation can insure that they provide for themselves. Churches joined some of the first contemporary local living wage movements, such as the Baltimore effort in 1994, because they started seeing increasing numbers of working poor at their food banks (Gertner 2006). Such groups would certainly argue that minimum wage laws are necessary to solve the national problem of poverty. Additionally, they even argue that more local ordinances are necessary to solve the problem of poverty in particular communities, and that religious charities are not an adequate substitute. Charities, according to this argument, are designed to take care of those who cannot work or have particular difficulties which can be taken care of more efficiently by religion than by government.

Religious groups with significant numbers of racial minorities have a particular interest in the living wage movement. Snarr (2011) discusses the involvement of black Protestant and Hispanic Catholic groups in living wage campaigns as an effort to address poverty and inequality in their own communities. The 1987 congressional hearing testimony by Archie LeMoen, who belongs to the predominantly black Progressive National Baptist Convention, noted that minorities are among those most impacted by low wages (Fair Labor Standards Act 1987).

Some media accounts of the Let Justice Roll campaign in 2006 also show the continuing relevance of personal work with the poor as a factor. For example, during Let

Justice Roll's 2006 campaign, the Toledo Blade quoted a food bank director as saying "we can't just keep giving these people handouts; we have to address the systemic problems that keep people in poverty." (Yonke 2006A). The New York Catholic Bishops, in their May 2012 statement backing a minimum wage increase, they point out "we do oversee the largest nongovernmental network of health, education and charitable ministries" and "What we can tell you from first-hand experience is that it is becoming increasingly difficult for the working poor of our state to make ends meet." (Catholic News Agency 2012). Overall, for most denominations, the costs of minimum wage laws are mitigated by the benefits of such laws, including the lesser poverty of its members and others who may seek help from its service providers. The activism of Let Justice Roll and other groups advocating for state minimum wages seamlessly combines morality, economic justice and the practical overburdening of religious charities.

Minimum Wage Activism: The Growth of a State and Local Movement

It is fair to conclude that religious activism in favor of the minimum wage became stronger in the 1990s than at any time since the Great Depression, when religious groups, armed with theological and practical points from the social gospel era, supported the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (Reichley 1985). However, academic works and newspaper articles do not accurately represent religious contributions to federal minimum wage efforts during the mid-twentieth century. Such works certainly yield little evidence that religious groups were very influential in the debate about the federal minimum wage before 2000. The study of academic texts also provides little evidence that religious activity on the minimum wage has been very influential even after 2000. Willis Nordlund's history of the federal minimum wage program, does not mention churches as actors in the minimum wage

debate except during the program's passage in the 1930s. Wuthnow and Evans's study of mainline Protestant denominations, ignores the minimum wage but finds significant mainline Protestant involvement in federal legislative debates about poverty such as welfare reform. Gerald Waltman's comparison of minimum wage policy in the United States and United Kingdom, mentions religious groups as supporters of the minimum wage, but primarily in the context of local and state efforts. Bartels (2008) singles out the Episcopal Church as a significant supporter of the minimum wage in recent years. It should be noted that some of these sources were written after the 2007 federal minimum wage increase, indicating that religious interest groups have never become a critical part of the federal minimum wage debate. The Congressional Record of House and Senate floor proceedings also mentions few statements by members of Congress regarding religious influence on the federal minimum wage. Finally, media reports regarding the minimum wage increases in 1977 and 1989 do not mention religious groups as a significant interest group, framing the debate as one between business and labor (e.g. Miller 1977; Weinraub 1989).

However, a search of the ProQuest Congressional database finds that representatives of the National Council of Churches testified at congressional committee hearings regarding the Minimum Wage during the 1950s and 1960s, while representatives of the Catholic Church testified at hearings in the 1950s and 1980s. Scholars have previously failed to study these, either because they searched other databases which did not include these hearings, or because they did not consider these hearings to be worthy of attention.

Local Living Wage Movements in Context

The turn of religious groups toward state and local activism should be placed in the context of the relationship between state and federal minimum wage increases since the 1980s.

There were some state minimum wages higher than the federal minimum wage before the rise of the contemporary living wage movement. The social movement likewise continues, as minimum wage advocates argue that even the small minimum wage increases that are often achieved do not make the minimum wage high enough, or help workers in places which will not increase the minimum wage.

As Bradley (2014) summarized in a report for the Congressional Research Service, a few states continued to have higher minimum wages than the federal level even when the federal minimum wage was increased more often from the 1940s through the 1970s. However, the number of states with higher minimum wages increased dramatically in the 1980s as the length of time between further increases extended. In 1983, two years after the 1981 increases ended those mandated in 1977, only three states had higher minimum wages than the federal level, and this number increased to 16 states by the time of the next minimum wage increases in 1989. During the 1990s, a federal minimum wage increase caused a decline in growth of state minimum wages, as the social movements in favor of a living wage began by focusing on local municipalities starting with Baltimore in 1994. The next significant round of increases in state minimum wages occurred between 2003 and 2006, another period in which the federal minimum wage had not been increased for nearly a decade, when the number of states with a higher minimum wage climbed from 12 to 22. This effort included significant contributions from religious groups including legislative lobbying, social protests and public mobilization, especially after the formation of the Let Justice Roll coalition in 2005. This time, many of the states which had higher minimum wages continued to have higher minimum wages than the federal level even after the increases passed in 2007. By 2010, 15 states had higher minimum wages. In 2014, over a

dozen states passed minimum wage increases, continuing the pattern in which states begin to increase their minimum wages when the federal government does not increase the minimum wage for a long period of time. As of November 2014, following the 2014 legislative and election cycle, a record 29 states have higher minimum wages than the federal level.²⁰

In periods where the numbers of state minimum wage increases have gone up, there is generally an increase in religious activism. While those calling for state minimum wages are usually genuinely interested in improving public policy in their own states, they also hope to pressure the federal government to take action nationally, and use their ability to gain significant political support in the states as a talking point to show that there is significant support across the country for higher minimum wages.

The Rise of the Local and State Living Wage Movement (1994-2006)

In 1994 religious groups began to be heavily involved in campaigns to increase the minimum wage in local areas, starting in Baltimore with a minimum wage campaign only for city contractors. Catholic and mainline Protestant clergy worked with labor and community organizers to form Baltimoreans United for Leadership Development (BUILD), which engaged in grassroots activism. Campaigns in other cities followed (Pearce 1996). A coalition between religious denominations including the Catholic Church and mainline Protestants with labor and community groups was particularly strong in Boston (Waltman 2011) and Los Angeles (Solidarity, 1999). The Boston effort involved labor, community and religious groups in roughly equal numbers personally lobbying city council members. There

²⁰ All data for this paragraph taken from Bradley (2014).

were an increasing number of articles in favor of the Minimum Wage in the Catholic media, responding to these efforts (e.g. Haas 1994; Bole 1995; O'Shaughnasy 1999).²¹

The Baltimore movement and its successors across the country did not come with an increasing voice for religious groups in the debate about the federal minimum wage in 1996. As in 1989, news stories also framed the issue of the minimum wage as a struggle between labor and business (e.g. Clymer 1996). A search of Worldwide Faith News, an aggregator which collects religious press releases, did not even yield any press releases about the minimum wage from the NCC and mainline denominations, which started to appear in subsequent minimum wage campaigns. When Democrats unsuccessfully attempted to pass a minimum wage increase in 2000, the National Council of Churches and other religious organizations only became involved by writing letters to Congress which they published as press releases.

In March 2000, the National Council of Churches advocated for an increase in the Minimum Wage by sending a letter to Congress as part of an interfaith effort. The letter was signed by leaders of all seven mainline denominations and the African Methodist Episcopal Church. The letter advocated increasing the Minimum Wage by \$1, so that all workers could afford to support themselves and a family. In addition, it was signed by Thomas Gumbleton, a Catholic auxiliary bishop of Detroit.²² It was not signed by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. This letter was entered into the Congressional Record by Michigan Democratic representative David Bonior, a Catholic, during a debate on the House floor about legislation to raise the minimum wage.

²¹ The National Catholic Reporter devoted particular attention to the minimum wage issue in the late 1990s. It has a long-standing record of covering Catholic social justice issues.

²² Gumbleton is known as one of the most progressive Catholic bishops, notable for his opposition to the Church's position on gay rights, in addition to his outspokenness on economic justice issues.

Following the election of President George W. Bush, faith leaders sent another letter to Congress (Ortiz 2001). However, efforts to increase the minimum wage did not go far during George W. Bush's first term despite the continuing decline in its real value (Waltman 2011). Possible reasons include the government's pre-occupation with foreign policy, and Republican victory in the 2002 elections.

The living wage movement achieved victories in state ballot measures in Washington in 1998 and Oregon in 2002 (Bradley 2014). Religious groups appear to have focused on more local efforts during this time. Catholic clergy and laity were significantly involved along with other religious groups in a campaign to raise the minimum wage in Santa Fe, New Mexico in 2003, where the Catholic population is high (Gertner 2006; Waltman 2011). Clergy spoke at city council meetings regarding the living wage in Eugene, Oregon in 2002 and 2003 (Moseley 2002). Catholic and Protestant leaders were involved significantly in the successful living wage effort in San Diego in 2005, arguably more than in any other city. They spoke at city council meetings, held congregational meetings, and engaged in neighborhood activism (Snarr 2011).²³

The Beginning of Let Justice Roll

By the time Congress made its next serious attempt at a minimum wage increase in 2006, Let Justice Roll had begun its efforts which focused on state minimum wage increases. However, the foundational efforts of LJR a few months earlier called for a federal increase, even as it pledged to use state legislation and ballot measures as a means toward that end.

²³ Snarr's book presents an argument that the religious living wage movement was stronger in San Diego than in other cities she studied, most of which were in the South.

Let Justice Roll's first action for the Living Wage was a November 2005 letter to Congress. It was signed by NCC general secretary Bob Edgar, leaders of all seven mainline denominations, and ministers from most of those denominations. In addition, it was signed by Father Jim Hug, of the progressive Catholic group Center of Concern. The organization's leaders held a press conference with Senator Ted Kennedy (who is himself a Catholic and a consistent leader in minimum wage efforts for his entire Senate career) in Washington DC, according to LJR's first press release on November 7, 2005. It received some media coverage (e.g. Religious leaders launch campaign 11/8/2005; Carpenter 11/8/2005).²⁴

In June and July 2006, there was an attempt by the Democratic minority in Congress to pass a federal minimum wage increase, when Ted Kennedy proposed an amendment to the defense authorization bill. Let Justice Roll lobbied specific senators, in addition to sending general press releases calling on both houses of Congress to support the legislation (Vanden Heuvel 2006).

However, the efforts of Let Justice Roll and other religious advocates in the 2006 elections centered on its state campaigns, with hope that a series of statewide victories and Democratic election victories would lead to a federal minimum wage. The group excelled at outsider tactics, including mobilizing congregations and outreach to voters for ballot measures. However, when necessary, it was able to lobby legislatures in some states through insider tactics such as private meetings at State legislative buildings.

LJR's primary purpose was to coordinate a variety of local movements across the country. However, the organization sought to motivate activists through symbolic activities in large cities (Snarr 2011). For example, nationwide efforts began with a campaign called

²⁴ *Human Events*, for which Carpenter published her article, is a conservative magazine.

Living Wage Days on Martin Luther King Day weekend 2006, which involved dozens of “rallies, special services and other community events” at churches mostly in states where the group would soon attempt to pass a minimum wage increase, including an event in Boston with Ted Kennedy, an event at the large Riverside Church in New York City, 60 in Ohio and 20 in Arkansas (Francis 2006A). The event in Boston with Ted Kennedy received media coverage (Kennedy Keynotes, 2006). Though mainline Protestant and Unitarian ministers were most prominently featured, Senator Kennedy was involved and at least in Arkansas, events were held at Catholic congregations.

State-Level Minimum Wage Successes (2006)

During the spring and summer of 2006, the state legislatures of West Virginia, Arkansas, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Michigan passed minimum wage increases, with minor LJR involvement in the lobbying effort in all states and substantial effort in others. The first of these state efforts to be successful was West Virginia. The West Virginia Council of Churches was among those lobbying the legislature to pass a minimum wage increase, (WV Minimum Wage Hike 2006), which yielded media coverage from the Charleston Gazette, but there is little other available evidence of religious influence. In Arkansas, the state legislature passed a minimum wage increase with only three dissenting votes and Republican governor Mike Huckabee signed it into law in April 2006. This effort included significant LJR involvement (National Council of Churches News 2006A). NCC denominations involved in the Give Arkansas a Raise coalition included two African-American churches (African Methodist Episcopal Zion and National Baptist Convention USA), and most of the mainline denominations. Roman Catholics were also included, but I have found no evidence that Catholic bishops in Arkansas were involved. The minimum

wage increase was not as large as was previously proposed, but based on new polling indicating that support for the minimum wage among conservatives decreases as the proposed increase becomes larger, LJR and other coalition partners agreed to the strategy of advocating for a smaller increase (Brush 2006). The Arkansas Times cited Steve Copley, a Methodist minister, as the leader of the Give Arkansas a Raise coalition, involved in negotiations to increase the minimum wage through the state legislature (Sabin 2006). Religious groups also lobbied specific legislators in North Carolina and held events at the state capitol (Kane 2006). An account of LJR's activities written after the election singled out Arkansas and North Carolina as states where LJR was most involved in the legislative effort (Vanden Heuvel and Graham-Felson 2007). In Michigan, the Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice claimed on its website that it was circulating petitions for a ballot measure, but the state legislature passed a minimum wage increase before the petition drive was complete. There is less evidence of religious involvement in Pennsylvania, but the Pennsylvania Council of Churches did pass a resolution asking the legislature to act on the minimum wage. Overall, Let Justice Roll's most significant contribution in this round of legislative efforts was mobilizing religious involvement in southern states where there was already a living wage movement and some promising indications of willingness by legislators to compromise.

The National Council of Churches and Let Justice Roll participated significantly in the fall 2006 elections to mobilize voters in support of minimum wage increases in several states where the issue was decided as a ballot measure. Preparations began as early as the spring (Brush 2006). This included gathering petition signatures for the ballot measures (Vanden Heuvel and Graham-Felson 2007). Living Wage Days included instructions for

churches to devote some of their worship in October to living wage campaigns. Rallies, interfaith study groups, worship services and prayer breakfasts were sponsored (Francis 2006B). Newspapers in three of the six states verify that Let Justice Roll and other religious groups did significant work to mobilize voters for minimum wage propositions.

Colorado

For the ballot measure campaign in Colorado, Let Justice Roll in Colorado partnered with Lutheran Advocacy Ministry. The campaign included having ministers talk about the issue with congregations and campaign members distributing literature to congregations. Additionally, in a separate but related campaign, Colorado's Catholic bishops decided that the Colorado Catholic Conference would endorse the ballot measure to increase Colorado's minimum wage (Gorski 2006). On the other hand, some articles about the living wage campaign neglected to mention religious interest groups among the supporters of the effort (McGee 2006).

Missouri

The Missouri Catholic Conference, representing the state's bishops, endorsed the minimum wage increase and planned to urge laity to vote for it (St Lewis Review 2006). Let Justice Roll's Audrey Hollis was a key organizer for the Missouri group Jobs with Justice, which mobilized for the campaign (Gerian 2006). One effort of Let Justice Roll was a "Labor in the Pulpits" campaign on Labor Day weekend, which received media coverage (Corrigan 2006).

An exit poll from CNN shows significant religious support for the minimum wage in Missouri. The results indicated that 77% of white Catholics voted for the minimum wage. This is slightly ahead of the Protestant vote in favor of the minimum wage. 73% of

Protestants voted yes, with the vote in favor decreasing to 70% when counting only white Protestants, and decreasing to 65% when counting only white evangelicals. This indicates that white mainline Protestants likely voted for the minimum wage at a similar rate as white Catholics, but support even among evangelicals was still considerable. These results indicate that religious advocates in general, and the Catholic Church in particular, had significant success in Missouri. On the other hand, though about 70% of weekly churchgoers voted for the increase in Missouri, those not attending church were even more likely to vote in favor, at 85%.²⁵

Ohio

LJR devoted particular attention to the Ohio campaign throughout 2006. In March 2006, the Wall Street Journal quoted LJR leader Paul Sherry as saying that he would be in a delegation visiting the state legislature (Precifs 2006). The Ohio Council of Churches, the United Methodist Church and the Catholic Archdiocese of Cincinnati were among the religious groups to endorse the minimum wage proposition and promise a week of action in July to make sure it got on the ballot (Yonke 2006A). The most substantive actions included mobilizing volunteers to collect signatures to put the initiative on the ballot. Those quoted in media accounts noted that churches had never before come out so strongly to support a ballot initiative. Representatives from over a dozen Christian denominations were among those attending a press conference at Central United Methodist Church in Toledo (Yonke 2006A). In addition to gathering petition signatures for the minimum wage initiative, some congregations engaged in voter registration drives after Sunday services (Camiskey and Johnson 2006).

²⁵ These exit polls were taken in Missouri, Ohio and Montana, but not in Colorado, Nevada or Arizona. They were reproduced partially in Waltman (2011).

Specific events received some media coverage in the weeks leading up to the elections. In Athens, Ohio, there was a meeting at a Lutheran Church to educate and motivate campaigners from local churches. Although only 20 people attended, one of the speakers was an organizer of similar meetings throughout the state, along with rallies and voter outreach efforts (Tillotson 2006). Another example of an event was a Voting our Values Rally at a Presbyterian Church in Columbus, Ohio, a few days before the election. It was sponsored by Let Justice Roll along with Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good and We Believe Ohio. This event also included Evangelicals, including a pastor from the Vineyard Church (a National Association of Evangelicals member denomination) and a non-local visitor, Sojourners leader Jim Wallis (Johnson 2006A). An article after the election noted that religious groups worked together to oppose an initiative to allow slot machine gambling in addition to supporting the minimum wage increase, especially by preaching, putting out signs at churches, and distributing lawn signs (Briggs 2006). Finally, in a special effort to reach out to evangelicals, LJR bought Christian radio ads shortly before the election (Faith in Public Life 2006). These events on their own may not have been significant for an effort involving lobbying of legislators, but they provide evidence of somewhat effective activism for a ballot initiative. After the election, religious leaders did engage in lobbying and social protest at the state capitol when Republicans attempted to block implementation of the passed initiative (Johnson 2006B).

On the other hand, some news articles about Ohio's minimum wage campaign neglected to mention the role of religious groups. *The Washington Post*, for example, portrayed the campaign as an effort of unions and 527s tied to the Democratic Party (Goldfarb and Broader 2006). CNN exit polls also cast some doubt on the role of religious

efforts on behalf of the measure. The poll found that 52% of Catholics and 40% of Protestants in Ohio voted against the minimum wage increase. The Catholic opposition is significantly high given that the Ohio Catholic bishops endorsed the initiative, and Catholics usually support minimum wage increases at much higher percentages. Regrettably, polling of Protestants was divided only by race; 85% of black Protestants and 55% of white Protestants voted Yes. There is no distinction among white Protestants between mainliners, whose denominations were in support of the increase, and evangelicals, whose denominations were less supportive. Finally, 55% of those who attend church weekly voted in favor of the increase; one point below the statewide vote of 56%. Therefore, while certain congregations and constituencies may have been mobilized effectively, this poll indicates that religious groups were not able to live up to their promise of persuading conservative Catholics and evangelicals. Religious groups were doubtless were still an important part of the coalition, but they were only able to reach those who already agreed or at least were open to their theological and political orientation toward social justice.

National Campaign

At the national level, LJR also launched a campaign to get business owners to speak out in favor of a living wage. This effort received some media coverage before the election (Business Briefs 2006) and after the election (Zeller 2006). I have found no examples of business owners, conservative activists or politicians directly addressing the arguments of religious leaders during the 2006 campaigns, as opposed to their responses against secular arguments.

Overall, there is enough media coverage to prove that religious groups put forward a significant effort in the 2006 state minimum wage campaigns, especially the state legislative

effort in Arkansas and the ballot initiatives in Colorado, Missouri and Ohio. The impact of LJR was well respected enough by other coalition partners that they were introduced by Senator Ted Kennedy at a celebratory press conference in Washington DC on November 16, 2006. C-Span video of the event shows Paul Sherry speaking after Senators Kennedy, Schumer and Clinton and AFLCIO director John Sweeney (“Minimum wage increase,” 2006). They certainly did not eclipse unions as the most active and influential backers of the initiative. However, their attempt to frame the minimum wage issue as a part of Christian values received recognition from non-religious media sources. Paul Sherry stated after the election that the Minimum Wage became “the values issue of the 2006 elections.” (Gerian 2006). In an interview with *The Nation* on December 4, 2006, Sherry stated that the issue of the Minimum Wage “crossed political lines.” He pointed out that in his speeches across the country, he was able to change people’s minds by pointing out that people working full time minimum wage at the time made only about \$10,000 a year. He also pointed out failures of conservative ballot measures on both fiscal and social issues in the 2006 elections, contrasting these results with the victory of the minimum Wage (Hayes 2006).

The 2007 Federal Minimum Wage Increase

The NCC’s reaction to the 2006 elections noted that a Democratic Congress would be likely to pass a Minimum Wage (NCC News 2006C). During their campaigning for state minimum wages in 2006, religious activists repeatedly stressed that low wages are a nationwide problem. Therefore, it is possible to argue that though Let Justice Roll and other religious groups had minimal impact on the legislative debate which ended with passage of the 2007 Fair Minimum Wage Act, they sought to gain influence through their work in the states which would later translate to the federal level, and they achieved this goal. They did,

however, make some effort to pressure members of Congress, and encourage allies in Congress to highlight their support. Paul Sherry's (2006) interview in *The Street Spirit* noted that his expectation was for congressional Democrats to fight for a minimum wage increase precisely because the 2006 elections would show the minimum wage's popularity, both because of Democratic campaign promises and the anticipated passage of the state ballot measures. *The Washington Post* acknowledged that one of the NCC's major legislative goals was a minimum wage increase, though it did not give any examples of their contributions (Cooperman 2007).

Evidence from the congressional record substantiates the claim that congressional allies in addition to Ted Kennedy respected the contributions of religious activism. When introducing legislation to raise the federal minimum wage at the beginning of the congressional session in 2007, with the Democrats newly in control of Congress, California Democratic Congressman George Miller, a Catholic, acknowledged churches and other religious groups as key supporters of the effort, in a speech preserved in the Congressional Record (Miller 2007). On January 7, 2007, days before the House's scheduled minimum wage debate, Let Justice Roll presented a letter signed by over a thousand faith leaders. The vast majority were mainline Protestants, including the leaders of all the mainline denominations, dozens of bishops, and hundreds of ministers. Evangelicals were represented by Sojourners leader Jim Wallis, but few others. Catholics included Bishop Gumbleton, Los Angeles auxiliary bishop Gabino Zavala, a layman named Francis X. Doyle who had served as the Associate General Secretary of the USCCB, the leaders of Pax Christi and Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good, and the leaders of several orders of nuns. LJR also announced the continuation of its campaign to get business leaders to support the living

wage movement publicly (Vu 2007). LJR touted its successful efforts to get state minimum wage increases, and lamented the increased cost of living combined with the record-breaking period without a wage increase. LJR's letter was entered into the congressional record on January 23 by Senator Kennedy. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops sent a separate letter to Congress on January 8, signed by Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio, chair of the domestic policy committee. It quoted Pope Benedict XVI's recent encyclical as an argument that the Minimum Wage was part of the necessary effort to achieve a "politics of justice and dignity." (DiMarzio, 2007). While other denominations sent letters, it appears that most of the influence that religious organizations did bring to the table derived from religious groups in an ecumenical sense rather than any particular denomination. On the other hand, Senator Kennedy, in a floor debate on February 1 from the Congressional Record, read a letter from Catholic Charities director Larry Snyder, discussing increasing requests for help by the working poor.

After the initial round of legislative debate in January, there are few available examples of religious lobbying on the bill. In March 2007, NCC General Secretary Edgar criticized a proposal which put a minimum wage increase in a bill which also included war funding (NCC News 2007). A leader of LJR was interviewed in a Cox News Service article about the congressional battle over the Minimum Wage, expressing frustration over delays caused by Republican efforts to insert tax cuts for small businesses (Kelly 2007). When the 2007 Fair Minimum Wage Act was passed, LJR leaders were at a rally on Capitol Hill celebrating the increase according to its own press release. However, media reports do not mention the efforts of LJR or other religious leaders. *The New York Times* framed the minimum wage as a cause primarily for labor unions. On the other hand, it also noted that

the usual business opponents of the minimum wage sent letters of opposition but did not do the rest of their usual lobbying. The consensus among these interests and congressional analysts was that the Minimum Wage was a foregone conclusion with a strong Democratic mandate in Congress and a record length of time without an increase. Though business groups lobbied for tax breaks, they did not make a serious attempt to block the minimum wage increase as a whole (Hulce 2007). Therefore, it is possible that religious leaders could have built a stronger lobbying effort if they felt that the success of the bill was in doubt.

Religion and the minimum wage since 2007

Religious backers of the 2007 minimum wage increase soon started advocating for a federal minimum wage increase to \$10 according to banners on the LJR website. Sherry attended a Senate press conference with Ted Kennedy and labor leaders advocating a further minimum wage increase on November 7, 2007. In July 2008, the group began circulating a Faith Leader letter to Congress advocating for “\$10 in 2010.” The campaign began when one of the incremental federal minimum wage increases passed in 2007 took effect. LJR set a goal of gathering signatures from faith leaders in every congressional district. This faith letter is still linked from the home page on the LJR website. Because of broken links, it is unclear if LJR ever achieved this milestone. A list of signatories by state was released in January 2011, however. A disproportionate number of the local signatories were from Unitarian Universalists. While some Catholics and black Protestants signed, outreach to Jews, Unitarians and a few of the mainline denominations (especially United Church of Christ) appeared to be much more successful. A majority of the other local signatories were Mainline Protestant ministers. The leaders of the Catholic organizations Network and Pax

Christi were represented under Washington DC, as was Jim Wallis of Sojourners and some of the Washington office directors of the mainline denominations (Let Justice Roll, n.d.).

LJR also continued state and local minimum wage campaigns after the federal victory in 2007, most prominently in Memphis, Tennessee (Snarr 2011). In March 2008, LJR announced an event in Memphis, Tennessee, co-convened along with a labor group, which called for a living wage on the 40th anniversary of Martin Luther King's visit to Memphis on behalf of striking sanitation workers, during which he was assassinated. The event included a 24-hour fast and calls for people to pressure Memphis city councilors to mandate a living wage for Memphis. The event included mainline Protestant and black Protestant clergy, along with a speaker from Sojourners and Jewish and Catholic participants. Snarr (2011) stated that religious groups played a minor role in the Memphis fight as compared to the 2005 San Diego fight, but still participated significantly through social protest, education of congregations, and lobbying of city councilors.

The inauguration of President Obama and an even stronger Democratic hold on Congress inspired a renewed push by LJR in January 2009 for another federal minimum wage increase. LJR's own press release supplemented releases by four mainline denominations; the Presbyterian Church USA, United Methodist Church, United Church of Christ and Disciples of Christ, which stated that increasing numbers of faith leaders were signing the letter advocating "\$10 in 2010." A newspaper article quoted LJR's new chair, United Methodist minister Steve Copley, who had coordinated the 2006 Arkansas campaign, stating that the 2008 financial crisis made a minimum wage increase even more necessary, and that states with higher minimum wages than the federal level actually have lower unemployment (National Faith Leaders, 2009). Holly Sklar did several media interviews in

July 2009, providing evidence of LJR's potential to continue as a relevant player in the minimum wage debate (e.g. Krerowicz 2009). Democrats accused Republicans of blocking minimum wage increases during the 2010 elections, and organized labor continued their interest in the issue of the Minimum Wage (Stein, 2010). However, the Minimum Wage was a less pressing issue for congressional Democrats compared to budget negotiations and health care reform.

The Republican takeover of Congress and many state legislatures in the 2010 election occurred as the living wage movement, and its religious participation, went into what turned out to be a temporary decline. Few states had minimum wage increases between 2008 and 2012, according to data from the National Conference of State Legislatures and a 2014 report from Congressional Research Service. The recently increased federal minimum wage caused interest in immediate minimum wage increases to be limited. Interest was revived after the 2010 elections, but by then, conservative victories made making progress on these increases impossible. However, some work by religious advocacy groups did continue. LJR's faith leader letter, and a separate letter from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, were sent to Congress in 2011.

Minimum wage efforts revived in the wake of President Obama's reelection in 2012, as fast food workers began protests across the country in November 2012. Ministers were involved in these protests, especially in New York City (Resnikoff 2014). As protests continued throughout 2013, the Presbyterian Church USA was particularly involved in these protests, though there was backlash by conservatives with the Presbyterian Church and other denominations (Weber 2013). The apparent slowness of most denominations to get involved in this effort likely did not prevent local ministers and congregations from joining protests,

but did limit the immediate mobilization of a potential national constituency for the movement.

Religious groups also participated in renewed conventional lobbying efforts for a federal minimum wage increase in 2013 and 2014, despite the refusal of House Republicans to seriously consider them. President Obama has consistently supported a minimum wage increase, yet he has so far been the first Democratic President since before Franklin Roosevelt not to be able to sign a raise. This included a significant increase in the activity of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in its campaign for the federal minimum wage. In June 2013, as noted earlier, Bishop Blair of the Domestic Justice, Peace and Human Development Committee testified before a Senate committee in commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the Minimum Wage. Over the following months, this testimony and some nationwide protests regarding Congress's refusal to increase the minimum wage resulted in more articles about the minimum wage in the Catholic media, including *America* magazine and *The National Catholic Reporter* (e.g. Roewe 2013, Clark 2013, Rotandaro 2014).

In January 2014, Miami bishop Thomas Wenski, the new chair of the USCCB Justice, Peace and Human Development Committee, and Father Larry Snyder of Catholic Charities USA, sent a letter to Congress, which received attention in the Catholic media (e.g. Archbold 2014, Magliano 2014). It appears that the USCCB, barring further changes, has formed a habit of sending letters to Congress in favor of minimum wages, which mobilize interest from Catholic media. Blaire's hearing testimony, which appears to be rare for religious organizations on the issue of the minimum wage since the 1960s, displays increased involvement by the USCCB on this issue.

The National Council of Churches has been involved in recent efforts primarily through the associations of many of its leaders and denominations with the coalition Interfaith Worker Justice, along with other social justice organizations with significant mainline and black Protestant participation, such as Faith in Public Life and the Ecumenical Poverty Initiative. Interfaith Worker Justice wrote a letter to Congress on behalf of efforts to increase the federal Minimum Wage in April 2014, signed by the leaders of the mainline denominations and several Catholic organizations such as Network and the conferences of men and women religious, among others. It also included the signatures of leaders from denominations which normally avoid politics, such as the Moravian Church, Swedenborgian Church, and the two Dutch Reformed denominations; the Reformed Church in America (a National Council of Churches member) and the Christian Reformed Church (a National Association of Evangelicals member) (Faith Leaders Urge Congress, 2014). However, efforts by congressional Democrats in 2014 were unsuccessful because of the categorical refusal of Senate Republicans to compromise, and the necessity of defending social programs such as unemployment compensation from further cuts. Additionally, state minimum wages, which in the Democratic Congress of 2007 were used to apply pressure for a federal minimum wage, are now used as an excuse by Republicans to block federal increases. Republican Senators Rob Portman (Ohio, United Methodist) and Dean Heller (Nevada, Mormon), both from states with high minimum wages passed by ballot initiatives, stated in 2014 that these state efforts prove that the minimum wage should be left to the states (Bolton 2014).

Despite these drawbacks, living wage advocates renewed their efforts to get state minimum wage increases, especially in 2014, as it became clear that Democrats would likely

lose the 2014 congressional elections. Religious groups were significant in these efforts in some states, and had minor involvement in most states. In 2013, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures, minimum wages were raised in only five states, though these included two of the largest, California and New York, in addition to Connecticut and Rhode Island through legislation, and New Jersey through a ballot measure after the governor vetoed legislation. Two other states had minimum wage increases passed in the legislature but they were vetoed by governors. According to the NCSL, state minimum wage victories were even more substantial in 2014. 14 states increased their minimum wages in 2014. This was an even more significant number of state minimum wage increases than in 2006. Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia and the District of Columbia increased the minimum wage through legislation. Meanwhile, four states (Alaska, Arkansas, Nebraska and South Dakota) increased their minimum wages through ballot measures. Though these are all small, conservative states, they are very diverse geographically. A non-binding ballot measure calling for a minimum wage increase also passed in Illinois (National Conference of State Legislatures 2013, 2014). All of these occurred with minimal evidence of religious involvement.

In 2013, religious organizations were not very involved in the campaigns in California, Connecticut and Rhode Island, but were somewhat involved in the legislative campaign in New York and the ballot measure campaign in New Jersey. The evidence for lack of involvement is the absence of mentions in major newspapers in the relevant state, and the lack of a website on which religious supporters of the minimum wage could be listed. The lack of involvement in California is somewhat surprising, since there has been a

history of churches advocating for local minimum wage increases, especially in Los Angeles.

The following paragraphs compare church involvement in New York and New Jersey New York's Catholic bishops had some influence in the debate over New York's minimum wage during the long campaign for an increase. On April 19, 2012, Albany bishop Howard Hubbard testified at a public forum sponsored by state Senate Democrats (Seiler 2012). *The Albany Times Union* noted that other "progressive" faith leaders were present, but did not name them. In May 2012, the New York Catholic Bishops, including Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York City, released a statement which received media attention (e.g. Kaplan 2012). The minimum wage increase was finally passed the following year.

The New York Raise the Minimum Wage Coalition includes several religious organizations, including the New York Council of Churches and the New York Episcopal Public Policy Network. The New York Conference of Catholic Bishops is not a member, but Albany bishop Howard Hubbard is involved in one of the member organizations, the New York Labor Religion Coalition (Raise the Minimum Wage, n.d.). Though the Catholic Church in New York is not a member of the coalition, it appears that the Catholic hierarchy was more publicly involved in the debate in 2012 and 2013 than the Episcopal Church or other denominations associated with the New York Council of Churches. Protestant churches in New York were involved in some local efforts to increase the state minimum wage, including a rally in Buffalo in June 2012. There was also a rally to raise the minimum wage in Albany in January 2013, for which the New York Labor Religion Coalition provided busses to transport people from New York City and other places throughout the state (Statewide Action to Raise the Minimum Wage 2013). Michael Livingston, the director

of Interfaith Worker Justice, claimed in an article published on the Methodist General Board of Church and Society's Website, that his organization provided support to the New York Religion Labor Coalition in its legislative lobbying efforts (Livingston 2013).

The New Jersey Ballot Measure

Churches were among the supporters of New Jersey's ballot measure to raise the minimum wage. Christian groups involved in the Raise the Minimum Wage NJ coalition include Christ Worship Centers Worldwide, Concerned Pastors of Trenton, Interfaith Worker Justice, La Iglesia del Pueblo Clifton, PICO, Samaritan Baptist Church, St. Augustine Presbyterian Church in Paterson, St. Luke's Baptist Church, St. Paul's Baptist Church in Trenton, St. Paul's African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Trenton Deliverance Center Church, and the United Christian Institute (Trenton Extension). Most of the congregations in the list are black Protestant churches in Trenton. Most of the other organizations are groups which have the primary purpose of social justice advocacy, such as Raise the Wage New Jersey (<http://www.raisethewagenj.org/>). While mainline denominations and state conferences of Catholic bishops were often involved in advocacy for minimum wage ballot measures in 2006, there is no sign of their activity in New Jersey in 2013. This is despite the fact that New Jersey borders New York, where religious groups including the Bishops were more involved in the living wage campaign at the same time. This finding also undermines the argument that religious groups are automatically more involved in ballot measures than legislation.

2014 State Campaigns

From the available evidence, religious activists were more involved in the minimum wage campaigns in Minnesota and Arkansas than in other states. While Minnesota increased

its minimum wage through legislation, Arkansas increased its minimum wage through ballot measures. These two states have no geographical or political commonalities. They do, however, have established records of religious involvement in social justice issues, especially by mainline denominations but with support from Catholics and other religious groups.

Minnesota

Political scientist Katherine Knutson's 2014 book *Interfaith Advocacy* is a study of Minnesota's Joint Religious Legislative Coalition. The book documents, based on her own interviews and Minnesota media sources, that the Joint Religious Legislative Coalition is one of the most established state level religious advocacy groups in the United States, and that it has been lobbying for minimum wage increases since at least the 1990s. It has paid for radio advertisements, conducted advocacy training, and lobbied legislators, among other tactics. The JRLC, founded in 1971, is an interfaith advocacy organization which lobbies for a range of progressive anti-poverty policies in Minnesota, and the abolition of the death penalty. It is a project of the Minnesota Catholic Conference and the Minnesota Council of Churches, along with Jewish and Muslim associations (Knudson 2014). In February 2013, Peg Kemberlyn of the Minnesota Council of Churches, one of the sponsors of the JRLC, testified before a legislative committee (Snowbeck 2013). In October 2013, the Joint Religious Legislative Coalition (JRLC) announced that the Minimum Wage would be a priority issue for 2014, in a public forum at Grand Rapids Presbyterian Church (Teod 2013).

A summary written by JRLC provides a list of concrete activities which indicate their influence in the minimum wage campaign during 2014. A JRLC leader was co-chair of Minnesota's campaign to raise the minimum wage along with leaders of the Children's

Defense Fund and AFL-CIO. The JRLC's 2014 session summary states "We were successful in framing the issue in terms of a full-time worker being able to secure, at a minimum, a poverty-level income for a family of three. We were also responsible for much of the research and the final negotiations around the cost-of-living adjustment." JRLC also lobbied legislators regarding the minimum wage at their annual Day on the Hill, organized four phone banks, held several "in-district meetings" with state legislators, mobilized turnout for town hall meetings, and submitted newspaper editorials. This broad range of tactics is remarkable for a state religious advocacy group. When the minimum wage increase took effect in August 2014, the public policy director of the Minnesota Council of Churches was interviewed by Minnesota Public Radio (Sepic 2014). Although media accounts of JRLC's claims are difficult to find, few other religious advocacy groups have made such detailed claims to record their combination of insider and outsider activity, and their credibility as activists is backed by Knutson's work regarding their earlier campaigns.

The significant religious effort in Minnesota can largely be explained by the political infrastructure of the JLRC and Minnesota Council of Churches. These organizations had a record of political work with the Minnesota legislature, and an effective ability to mobilize the public while working with coalition partners.

Arkansas

Arkansas had increased its minimum wage in 2006, with participation from Let Justice Roll and other religious groups. Steve Copley, the Methodist minister who was already leading the Give Arkansas a Raise coalition in 2006, continued to lead legislative efforts after the federal minimum wage overtook the state minimum wage in 2009. However, in 2014, as Copley described in an interview with the Arkansas Educational

Television Network, their legislative efforts failed and the group decided to undertake the arduous process of putting the minimum wage increase on the ballot in 2014 (Hiblin 2014). This involved deciding how much of a minimum wage increase to try for, and it was decided that the measure would provide a relatively conservative increase to \$8.50 over three years. The Arkansas Interfaith Alliance headed the group of volunteers gaining petition signatures (Sargent 2014). When the measure was passed with overwhelming support, Copley, still serving as chair of Give Arkansas a Raise coalition, received media recognition as the initiative's sponsor (e.g. Lyon 2014). Arkansas, as the only state in the Deep South to have passed a minimum wage increase in recent years, is also the state with the most religious involvement in the campaign. It seems likely that the organizational efforts of Copley are instrumental to its success. An unanswered question is why Arkansas has developed such a sustained living wage campaign, and a significant level of religious involvement, compared to many of the other states in its geographic region. The effort is headed primarily by United Methodists and other mainline Protestants, with some Catholic involvement and relatively little participation from Arkansas's large evangelical community.

Other states

Some other states that had legislative minimum wage increases did have religious involvement in the campaign.

Maryland. Maryland also had some significant involvement by religious organizations. Like Minnesota and Arkansas, its religious groups have a history of social justice advocacy, including the minimum wage, as the Baltimore campaign in 1994 was groundbreaking. Maryland also has a significant history of political involvement by the Catholic Church and black Protestant denominations, and its proximity to Washington DC

means that it is close to the offices of religious lobbyists. Yet Maryland's religious efforts were not as sustained as those in Minnesota and Arkansas.

In Maryland, the state Catholic conference expressed support for a state minimum wage increase in 2014 (Wagner 2014). *The Washington Post* noted that Maryland, for historical, demographic and geographic reasons, has always had more Catholic political influence than many other states.

The Catholic Church, mainline Protestant churches and black churches were also involved in outsider tactics. On Labor Day weekend 2013, minimum wage workers were invited to speak to dozens of congregations, especially in Baltimore (Roewe 2013). In February 2014, the Democratic governor of Maryland and mayor of Baltimore spoke at a rally outside a Baltimore Catholic church, along with an auxiliary Catholic bishop and a variety of mainline and black Protestant ministers (Wenger and Bottalico 2014).

West Virginia. In West Virginia, in April 2014, mainline Protestant ministers were involved in efforts to increase the state minimum wage again by lobbying legislators (Nyden 2014). West Virginia, like Arkansas, had been one of the first successful campaigns associated with Let Justice Roll in 2006.

Northeastern states and Hawai'i: minor involvement. Rhode Island's Jobs for Justice Coalition included an interfaith network of activists. The executive director of the Rhode Island Council of Churches was among those speaking at a rally at the Renaissance Hotel in Providence on June 26, 2014.²⁶ In neighboring Vermont, the American Friends Service Committee (Quakers) was included on the steering committee of Raise the Wage Vermont, and the campaign was also endorsed by the Vermont Interfaith Council. In

²⁶ Need a specific article from this site - <https://rijwj.wordpress.com/>

Delaware, the advocacy group Delaware ADA included a letter on its website from a dozen clergy, including Episcopalian and Methodist bishops (Americans for Democratic Action, Delaware Chapter, n.d.). Finally, in Hawaii, an interfaith organization called Faith Action for Community Equity campaigned for the successful minimum wage increase to \$10.10, including a visit to the state legislature (Faith Action for Community Equity, n.d.). However, all of these efforts did not have the sustained level of organization that was displayed in Minnesota and Arkansas. They received little media attention, had minimal claims of activity from their own websites, and had no record of lobbying on the websites of their state legislatures.

Other ballot measure campaigns

Although Arkansas's ballot access campaign had significant, possibly even decisive religious involvement, it cannot be determined that religious groups are automatically more involved in minimum wage campaigns when they are on the ballot, because the other three states where minimum wages were passed in 2014 by ballot measure, appeared to have little religious campaigning. These states had not had ballot measures on this issue before, but neither did five of the six states which passed minimum wages by ballot in 2006.

In Alaska, Reverend Michael Burke of Saint Mary's Episcopal Church was a significant enough campaigner that he was invited to testify at a public forum sponsored by the Alaska legislature in March 2014 ("Yes on 3," 2014). However, there is no evidence of a sustained campaign by religious organizations. In Nebraska and South Dakota, it does not appear that churches were significantly involved. An October 2014 article in the Omaha World Herald about organizations donating to the campaign, and a search of the Facebook page Nebraskans for Better Wages, along with analysis of other media accounts, does not

yield any evidence of church involvement (Stoddard 2014). On the other hand, the Omaha World Herald notes that there was no significant opposition campaign. Researching media accounts of South Dakota's minimum wage campaign also does not yield any mention of churches.

Overall, the states where churches were most involved already had established interfaith coalitions with experience working at the state level. National coalitions such as Let Justice Roll have the potential to strengthen these groups, as happened in Arkansas and to some extent West Virginia, both conservative states, in 2006. Minimum wage campaigns at the local level can develop based on local conditions, but networking at the state level requires more organizational commitment. Minnesota's unusual level of religious social justice lobbying was not begun by a national coalition, but involved political and social conditions particular to that state.

Fight for 15

More local efforts also continued in 2014 and beyond. In Seattle and its suburbs in 2013 and 2014, the Church Council of Greater Seattle encouraged its congregations to actively support the proposals and maintained a Living Wage journey website (<http://www.livingwagejourney.org>). The Republican victory in the 2014 elections has not demobilized living wage movements in local contexts, including religious congregations. On Palm Sunday 2015, congregations of several churches marched into a Chicago McDonald's to protest low wages (Rodriguez 2015). Religious leaders, along with labor union activists, conducted more events in April 2015 including a fast from food initiated by religious activists (Moberg 2015). Most recently, ministers at least in New York City, Chicago and

Detroit mobilized their congregations for “Fight for 15” protests, also supported by labor unions and community groups (Greenhouse 2015).

Such episodes support the indication that churches are still more likely to support living wage campaigns when they work within interfaith coalitions. While the less hospitable political climate for living wage campaigns may have decreased religious involvement for a time after the 2010 elections, such activism appears to be on the rise again at the local and state level, even without a broad-based organization such as Let Justice Roll. However, classic, insider lobbying efforts by single organizations do exist at the state level. In 2015, Catholic bishops in Iowa lobbied the legislature on behalf of the Minimum Wage, by meeting with legislators. This effort yielded the only direct response to religious advocacy of the minimum wage by a legislator opposed to an increase, as Republican Walt Rogers told *The Sioux City Journal* in 2015 regarding his meeting with the Catholic bishops, “I don’t agree with them on everything; we’re on the same page when it comes to saving babies.” This statement provides a recent example of Catholic bishops trying but failing to persuade socially conservative Republicans to support them on a progressive issue.

Conclusion

This study has argued that religious groups had a particularly high level of activity in living wage campaigns during the 2006 election campaign and shortly after, culminating in the passage of the 2007 Fair Minimum Wage Act. In 2006, the federal government had not increased the minimum wage for about a decade, causing the real value of the minimum wage to fall, and pastors noticed increasing demand for help from their congregations by the working poor. The local living wage movement active since the 1990s was growing, with several previous examples of working relationships between religious congregations of a

variety of backgrounds, and secular coalition partners. The stability of these coalitions, combined with a good election cycle for the Democratic Party, mobilized progressive religious activists for a successful effort at the local, state and federal level. Some moderate religious leaders, such as the Catholic bishops, have also worked on behalf of living wage campaigns, partially because of denominational social teachings about the Christian duty to insure protection for the poor, and partially because the living wage attracts more support from across the political spectrum compared to other progressive legislation. However, mainline, black Protestant and Quaker denominations distinguished themselves at the peak of the living wage fight, and are likely to continue their leadership in future campaigns. The living wage movement is also a significant example of an issue which receives the most attention from religious groups at the state and local level rather than the federal level. The Fight for \$15 movement was meant to gear up religious advocates and other living wage advocates for a federal fight following some successful local fights, in the likely event of a Democratic victory in the 2016 elections. Given that the minimum wage still did not increase by the end of the Obama administration, and that the Republicans won the 2016 election, local battles are likely to continue for some time, even though the record for the longest time without a minimum wage increase is less than two years away from being broken. Still, despite the low probability of short-term success, these efforts are likely to concentrate at the local and state level, not only for the benefit of particular communities, but also to express demand for a minimum wage at the federal level. Throughout, religious groups will argue not only that minimum wage increases are morally right and economically sound, but also that they prevent religious charitable agencies from being asked for help by the working poor, so they may focus on those out of work.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

How do religious groups develop positions on progressive efforts to address poverty such as minimum wages, welfare policy and health care policy? My findings, from research of previous books on the subject, media accounts and congressional committee transcripts, confirms the general scholarly consensus that the theological orientations of denominations largely explain the positions taken by the leaderships of denominations and interdenominational organizations. Critically, however, these theological orientations combine with political ideologies to form a lens through which groups examine social and economic issues. Evangelical denominations such as the Southern Baptist Convention, especially since the mobilization of conservative forces within the Church, argue that Christian faith is a key part of solving multi-generational poverty. Governmental programs which do not promote religious faith will be ineffective because they do not address the root causes of poverty. By contrast, mainline Protestants place far less importance on personal salvation as a necessity, and certainly do not believe that religious faith will, in itself, address poverty. Rather, under the influence of social gospel thinkers from the early twentieth century, they argue that governmental initiatives that do not address structural inequality will not address the root causes of poverty. The ways in which theology and economic ideas are connected are concisely articulated by Gerson (the Bush speechwriter and “compassionate conservative” who came to support the Circle of Protection), who stated in *The Washington Post* that religious activists on both the left and the right “pray to the same God but different economists” (Gerson 2011).

My research shows how religious groups consistently supplement their expressions of moral concern with arguments that policies will be effective. Christian Right opponents

of welfare and health care tout the successes of “faith-based compassion” and tax credits to incentivize marriage as replacements for social programs (e.g. Contract with the American Family, 1995), and argue that health care reform will cause rationing rather than improving care. Mainline Protestant, progressive evangelical and Catholic advocates of social welfare programs, health care reform and the minimum wage began using the slogan that “budgets are moral documents” during the Reagan Administration (Tipton 2007). They argue that governmental initiatives which provide income support to the poor, prevent the poor from having to spend inordinately on health care, and to earn more money from working, will strengthen families and improve the economy long-term, while moving the US toward being a socially just, Christ-like society at the same time. When these two theological and economic ideologies are compared, Earned Income Tax Credits are one of the few policies where there is agreement.

While I had suspected most of these dynamics early in my research, I still needed to answer further research questions: Under what circumstances have religious groups gone beyond taking positions on poverty, and aggressively lobbied in order to seek policy outcomes? More importantly, under what circumstances are religious groups most effective in lobbying on issues of poverty? Are they generally more successful when they focus on their theological teachings and moral vision? Or are they often better off engaging in more secular arguments on the social and economic effectiveness of policies? Which religious group is the most effective in lobbying for the poor overall?

I argue that the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and perhaps to an even greater extent its two large service agencies, Catholic Charities and the Catholic Health Association, are the most effective lobbyists for the poor. This is despite the fact that their

theological priority, over and above economic issues, is preventing access to abortion, and also despite the fact that they have a vocal plurality of economically conservative congregants and activists within their denomination. Catholic lobbyists for the poor compensate for these factors by relying on their expertise as leaders of charitable agencies and as health care providers. Their testimony at committee hearings for the past 70 years, as described in chapters 2 through 5, shows their ability to argue that they cannot provide the comprehensive services to families that government programs can provide. They have also, occasionally, been able to use their opposition to abortion to persuade conservative Republicans to weaken legislation cutting back welfare, including on the issue of family caps during the Clinton administration.

The story of the Catholic Church in the United States shows that there is a clear middle ground between the theologically liberal mainline Protestant lobbyists and the theologically conservative Southern Baptist lobbyists, which should not be surprising given American religious history. In the early twentieth century, social gospel Protestants and the founders of Catholic social teaching deeply believed that bringing religious faith to the poor was critically important, just as conservative Protestants did. But at the same time, having seen the plight of the poor, they argued that justice demanded that the government provide comprehensive programs. The Catholic Church, and some of those who may be termed moderate evangelicals, still believe that there are important religious values which must be maintained over and above economic justice, such as the protection of life beginning at conception, and, like conservatives, they are distressed that the government does not accept their position on these matters. But their belief in social injustice as a cause of poverty and

their expertise as charitable organizations combine to make them effective lobbyists for the poor regardless.

I sought in my research to make sure that the Catholic Church took concrete actions to argue for progressive policies, and the lists of media accounts and congressional hearing transcripts supplement the documents by the Bishops to provide a strong case that they exerted significant pressure to oppose welfare reform during the Clinton administration, and that the Catholic Health Association was instrumental in the passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. McAndrews (2012) notes that the Catholic Bishops were more willing to adopt compromise proposals than the mainline Protestants in the early 1970s, and I find that this trend has largely remained. However, even in the least likely case of support for progressive policies, the US Conference of Catholic Bishops wanted the same expansion of health care provisions for low income families and immigrants as the mainline Protestants during the passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, even as they criticized the Obama Administration from the opposite ideological direction on abortion.

The recent turn of the National Association of Evangelicals toward support for progressive efforts to address poverty provides more evidence that social conservative organizations have the potential to be powerful lobbyists for the poor. As discussed in Chapter 4, there are a couple possible reasons for the change in attitude by the NAE. First, they became disillusioned with the plans for faith-based partnerships which evangelicals had begun to support after they allowed that government may financially support the work of religious organizations helping the poor in the 1950s. The Bush Administration's failure to establish durable, well-funded programs convinced some that there would be no alternative

to governmental comprehensive programs. Second, just as the Catholic Church used arguments based on welfare's effect on abortion rates during the Clinton administration, other religious groups courted conservative evangelicals by agreeing to make proposals addressing the national debt after the 2010 election.

One may have expected that the National Council of Churches and its mainline and black Protestant denominations may be more effective in lobbying for the poor than Catholics and evangelicals. Mainline Protestant denominations, at least, have completely abandoned political movements against abortion and gay rights. Thus, they have little trouble accepting the Democratic Party's platform, except for those who believe it is not progressive enough. Black Protestant denominations, while more socially conservative, also have strong connections to the Democratic Party. NCC denominations too, have charitable organizations which testify at committee hearings, a variety of lobbying arms in Washington DC, and the Protestant Health Alliance was once powerful. Yet Catholic Charities is universally touted by media and academic accounts as being larger and more organized than the mainline charities combined. Additionally, while mainline denominational leadership is mostly liberal, there remains a gap between membership and leadership. This gap, in fact, is most pronounced on economic issues, where according to the 2015 Pew Landscape survey, mainline Protestants are split on whether aid to the poor does more harm than good; a lower percentage than among Catholics. The combination of a historic presence of fiscal conservative mainline denominations, the comparative lack of racial diversity (given that racial minorities are much more progressive on issues of poverty), and the influence of conservative think tanks to undermine the authority of mainline denominations are all factors.

It has been made clear repeatedly throughout this project that denominations cannot rely on the support of their members when it comes to economic policy. That is a key part of the reason why religious groups do lobby more effectively using their expertise on poverty; thus, in their secular rather than explicitly religious capacity. This does not detract from the importance of religion, as denominations need the right theological views in order to be interested in making those secular arguments. But when politicians realize that there are competing interpretations within a denomination, the moral authority of the leadership is undermined. This is also why religious groups have also relied on the tactic of mobilizing interfaith and secular coalitions. On the progressive side, they hold out hope that when they speak as a united voice of the faith community, or when they lend their support to secular anti-poverty groups, their moral vision will be listened to. The addition of the National Association of Evangelicals and other moderate conservative evangelicals made the moral unity of the Circle of Protection even stronger during the debt ceiling crisis in 2011. However, now that it is clear that evangelical public opinion on economics did not change with the NAE, and that evangelicals are as Republican as before, the effectiveness of the Circle of Protection is lessened.

Are there any circumstances when religious groups, including their supporters in the charitable agencies and secular coalition partners, can mobilize the support of their congregants based on a moral vision? I have argued that local and state minimum wage movements are the best contemporary example of success in this area. The minimum wage is a simple policy which can be changed at the state level and sometimes the local level, often by ballot measure. It has also not been increased at the federal level in a record amount of time, a fact of which most of the working poor are well aware. While the evidence that

religious identity impacts voting decisions on minimum wage ballot measures is lacking, the minimum wage is the most popular progressive issue among the religious, and local clergy and congregants have been most likely to work on it compared to welfare and health care.

Given falling rates of civic participation and social capital (Putnam 2000; Verba Schlozman and Brady 2011), it should not be too surprising that religious progressives have often been unable to generate lasting social movements. Division between progressives and conservatives within denominations, competing priorities, lack of organization, and apathy among progressive congregants all play a part. If a more durable movement linking active networks of local and national religious leaders were to arise, it would likely bolster the inside lobbying of charitable organizations, their partners in denominational leaderships, and anti-poverty advocates who work with them. Despite the lack of such a movement, and despite the low number of policy successes that are obviously attributable to religious groups, lobbyists from faith groups do remain a part of the debate on income support, health care and the minimum wage.

Based on this research, what can we expect from economic progressive religious denominations during the Trump administration and beyond? Malone (2017), in a profile for Reuters, describes a rising “religious left”, with more clergy attending activist meetings. A variety of faith leaders traveled to Washington DC when it appeared that a repeal of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act might pass the House. As the writing process for this project was concluding, Cox (2017), expressed skepticism about the rise of the Religious Left, given declining religiosity among liberals. The Religious Right, meanwhile, also faces declining numbers in some of its denominations and numerous defeats on cultural issues, even as it has arguably returned to political influence.

Part of the problem in these conversations is that the terms “Religious Left” and “Religious Right” are poorly defined. Cox (2015), for example, notes that many Hispanic Catholics are pro-life. Would they be a part of the Religious Left? Most likely not. However, they are also not in the Religious Right. Those who want to see comprehensive health coverage and a strong social safety net, but who are opposed to legalized abortion, should be classified as Christian centrists, and the Religious Left must accept them as allies in the fight for anti-poverty legislation because of their deep connections to charitable agencies which have experience in persuading difficult Republican congresses. The Catholic Bishops, the National Association of Evangelicals, and even some evangelicals to the right of the NAE are likely to advocate together for Earned Income Tax Credits, which are popular across the political spectrum of religious denominations. There is a good possibility that the Circle of Protection, including the USCCB and NAE, will continue advocating welfare, and it is possible that they can move the NAE and other evangelicals toward advocacy of some minimum wage increases. While the Catholic Health Association will continue to advocate for the maintenance of President Obama’s health reform legacy, and more progressive reforms should the opportunity arise, the Catholic Bishops and NAE are more likely to limit themselves to protecting specific health care programs for the poor, with little interest in broad reform agendas.

A fascinating development for the Religious Center and Right comes in the form of a new book by Rod Dreher (2016) called *The Benedict Option*, which has been described by David Brooks (2016) as the most important spiritual book for the decade. Dreher, a conservative journalist, argues that theologically conservative Christians should disengage from the Republican Party, and focus on strengthening the religious faith of their

communities. Does disengaging from the Republican Party mean that these conservative Christians would be more likely to support economically progressive ideas? The answer is most likely no. The inclination of theologically conservative Christians toward fiscal conservatism, especially when they distrust the government for cultural reasons, means that, at best, they will not actively oppose progressive anti-poverty efforts. The primary possibilities for movement from the Christian Right to the Christian Center are that just as before, charities operated by evangelicals, conservative Catholics, and others come to see the benefits of government aid to the poor.

Even if religion continues to decrease in popularity among the young, it is likely that the Christian Left, Center and Right will all survive in some form. Future research should focus on interviews with religious leaders seeking to mobilize the resources that denominations have remaining. It will be worth asking how denominations have in the past, and will continue in the future, to network with interfaith coalitions, encourage local congregations to engage with economic matters, oversee charitable organizations, and choose priorities. There is no doubt that, regardless of economic developments, cultural changes, and the party in power, religious groups will continue to be a powerful voice in American politics, and a key part of the debate on dealing with poverty.

Appendix: Tables of Voting Positions of Democrats For/Against Stupak Amendment

Note: Table 3 immediately below runs to three pages; see caption at end.

| Member Name | State | Tenure | Religion | Stupak Amendment | House Bill | Senate Bill |
|---------------------|-------|---|--|------------------|------------|-------------|
| Jason Altmire | PA | 2007-2013, defeated in primary during redistricting | Roman Catholic | Yes | No | No |
| Joe Baca | CA | 1999-2013, defeated by a Democrat | Roman Catholic | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| John Barrow | GA | 2005-2015, defeated | Baptist (unspecified) | Yes | No | No |
| Robert Marion Berry | AR | 1997-2011, retired | United Methodist | Yes | Yes | No |
| Sanford Bishop | GA | 1993-Present | National Baptist Convention, USA | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| John Boccieri | OH | 2009-2011, defeated | Roman Catholic | Yes | No | Yes |
| Dan Boren | OK | 2005-2013, retired | United Methodist | Yes | No | No |
| Bobby Bright | AL | 2009-2011, defeated | Southern Baptist | Yes | No | No |
| Dennis Cardoza | CA | 2003-2012 (resigned) | Roman Catholic | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Chris Carney | PA | 2007-2011, defeated | Roman Catholic | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Ben Chandler | KY | 2004-2013 (defeated) | Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church | Yes | No | No |
| Travis Childers | MS | 2008-2011 (defeated) | Southern Baptist | Yes | No | No |
| Jim Cooper | TN | 1983-Present | Episcopalian | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Jim Costa | CA | 2005-present | Roman Catholic | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Jerry Costello | IL | 1988-2012, retired | Roman Catholic | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Henry Cuellar | TX | 2005-present | Roman Catholic | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Kathy Dahlkemper | PA | 2009-2011, defeated | Roman Catholic | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Artur Davis | AL | 2003-2011, retired to run for governor | Lutheran | Yes | No | No |
| Lincoln Davis | TN | 2003-2011, defeated | Southern Baptist | Yes | No | No |
| Joe Donnelly | IN | 2007-2013, retired to run for Senate, successfully | Roman Catholic | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Mike Doyle | PA | 1995-Present | Roman Catholic | Yes | Yes | Yes |

| | | | | | | |
|------------------|----|--|-------------------------------|-----|-----|------------------|
| Steve Driehaus | OH | 2009-2011, defeated | Roman Catholic | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Brad Ellsworth | IN | 2007-2011, retired to run for Senate | Roman Catholic | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Bob Etheridge | NC | 1997-2011, defeated | Presbyterian Church USA | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Bart Gordon | TN | 1985-2011, retired | United Methodist | Yes | No | Yes |
| Baron Hill | IN | 1999-2005, 2007-2011, defeated | United Methodist | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Tim Holden | PA | 1993-2013, defeated in primary | Roman Catholic | Yes | No | No |
| Paul Kanjorski | PA | 1985-2011, defeated | Roman Catholic | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Marcy Kaptur | OH | 1983-Present | Roman Catholic | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Dale Kildee | MI | 1977-2013, retired and succeeded by his nephew | Roman Catholic | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Jim Langevin | RI | 2001-present | Roman Catholic | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Dan Lipinski | IL | 2005-Present | Roman Catholic | Yes | Yes | No |
| Stephen Lynch | MA | 2001-Present | Roman Catholic | Yes | Yes | No |
| Jim Marshall | GA | 2003-2011, defeated | Roman Catholic | Yes | No | No |
| Jim Matheson | UT | 2001-2015, retired after several close re-election campaigns and succeeded by Republican | Mormon | Yes | No | No |
| Mike McIntyre | NC | 1997-2015, retired after several close re-election fights and succeeded by Republican | Presbyterian Church USA | Yes | No | No |
| Charlie Melancon | LA | 2005-2011, retired to run for Senate | Roman Catholic | Yes | No | No |
| Mike Michaud | ME | 2003-2015, retired to run for governor | Roman Catholic | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Allen Mollohan | WV | 1983-2011, defeated in primary | American Baptist Churches USA | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| John Murtha | PA | 1974-2010, his death | Roman Catholic | Yes | Yes | Died before vote |
| Richard Neal | MA | 1989-Present | Roman Catholic | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Jim Oberstar | MN | 1975-2011, defeated | Roman Catholic | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Dave Obey | WI | 1969-2011, retired | Roman Catholic | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Solomon Ortiz | TX | 1983-2011 | United Methodist | Yes | Yes | Yes |

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------|----|---|--|-----|-----|-----|
| Tom Perriello | VA | 2009-2011, defeated | Roman Catholic | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Colin Peterson | MN | 1991-Present | Evangelical Lutheran Church in America | Yes | No | No |
| Earl Pomeroy | ND | 1993-2011, defeated | Presbyterian Church USA | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Nick Rahall | WV | 1977-2015, defeated | Presbyterian Church USA | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Sylvester Reyes | TX | 1997-2013 | Roman Catholic | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Ciro Rodriguez | TX | 1997-2005, 2007-2011 | Roman Catholic | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Mike Ross | AR | 2001-2013, retired | United Methodist | Yes | No | No |
| Tim Ryan | OH | 2003-Present | Roman Catholic | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| John Salazar | CO | 2005-2011, defeated | Roman Catholic | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Heath Shuler | NC | 2007-2013, retired after close re-election fights and succeeded by a Republican | Southern Baptist | Yes | No | No |
| Ike Skelton | MO | 1977-2011 | Disciples of Christ | Yes | No | No |
| Vic Snyder | AR | 1997-2011, retired | United Methodist | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Zach Space | OH | 2007-2011, defeated | Greek Orthodox | Yes | Yes | No |
| John Spratt | SC | 1975-2011, defeated | Presbyterian Church USA | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Bart Stupak | MI | 1993-2011 | Roman Catholic | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| John Tanner | TN | 1989-present | Disciples of Christ | Yes | No | No |
| Gene Taylor | MS | 1989-Present | Roman Catholic | Yes | No | No |
| Harry Teague | NM | 2009-2011, defeated | Baptist (unspecified) | Yes | No | No |
| Charlie Wilson | OH | 2007-2011, defeated | Roman Catholic | Yes | Yes | Yes |

Table 3: voting positions of Democrats who voted for the Stupak Amendment

| Name | State | Tenure | Religion | House bill | Senate bill |
|------------------|--------------|---------------------|--|-------------------|--------------------|
| John Adler | NJ | 2009-2011, defeated | Jewish (raised Episcopalian) | No | No |
| Michael Arcuri | NY | 2007-2011, defeated | Roman Catholic | Yes | No |
| Brian Baird | WA | 1999-2011, retired | Non-Denominational Protestant | No | Yes |
| Rick Boucher | VA | 1983-2011, defeated | United Methodist | No | No |
| Allen Boyd | FL | 1997-2011, defeated | United Methodist | No | Yes |
| Chet Edwards | TX | 1991-2011 | United Methodist | No | No |
| Stefanie Herseth | SD | 2004-2011, defeated | Evangelical Lutheran Church in America | No | No |
| Larry Kissell | NC | 2007-2013, defeated | Baptist | No | No |
| Suzanne Kosmas | FL | 2009-2011, defeated | United Methodist | No | Yes |
| Frank Kratovil | MD | 2009-2011, defeated | Episcopalian | No | No |
| Betsy Markey | CO | 2009-2011, defeated | Roman Catholic | No | Yes |
| Michael McMahon | NY | 2009-2011, defeated | Roman Catholic | No | No |
| Walt Minnick | ID | 2009-2011, defeated | Unitarian Universalist | No | No |
| Scott Murphy | NY | 2009-2011, defeated | Methodist, though not on UMC's list | No | Yes |
| Glenn Nye | VA | 2009-2011, defeated | Presbyterian | No | No |

Table 4: voting positions of Democrats who voted against the Stupak Amendment but also voted against either Reform bill

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