



Top Obama Aide Tells Pro-Life Advocate, "Not Our Goal to Reduce Abortions"

by **Wendy Wright**

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Author's Note: Because of the Obama speech at Notre Dame and the widespread misunderstanding that this Administration has fostered, others have urged me to make public what the White House official in charge of finding "common ground" stated in our meeting.

Two days before President Obama's [commencement address](#) at Notre Dame, I was at the White House for one of the meetings that he spoke about. About twenty of us with differing views on abortion were brought in to find "common ground." But the most important point that came from the meeting was perhaps a slip from an Obama aide.

It revealed that what many people believe -- including high-profile pro-life leaders who support Obama -- is sorely wrong.

Ask nearly anyone, "What is Obama's goal on abortion?" They'll answer, "Reduce the number of abortions." A Notre Dame professor and priest insisted this in a television debate after Obama's speech. The Vatican newspaper reported it. Rush Limbaugh led a spirited debate on his radio program the next day based on this premise.

But that's not what his top official in charge of finding "common ground" says.

[Melody Barnes](#), the Director of Domestic Policy Council and a former board member of Emily's List, led the meeting. As the dialogue wound down, she asked for my input.

I noted that there are three main ways the administration can reach its goals: by what it funds, its messages from the bully pulpit, and by what it restricts. It is universally agreed that the role of parents is crucial, so government should not deny parents the ability to be involved in vital decisions. The goals need to be clear; the amount of funding spent to reduce unintended pregnancies and abortions is not a goal.

The U.S. spends nearly \$2 billion each year on contraception programs -- programs which began in the 1970s -- and they've clearly failed. We need to take an honest look at why they are not working.

Melody testily interrupted to state that she had to correct me. "It is not our goal to reduce the number of abortions."

The room was silent.

The goal, she insisted, is to "reduce the need for abortions."

Well, this raises a lot of questions.

If you reduce the need, doesn't it follow that the number would be reduced? How do you quantify if you've reduced the "need"? Does Obama want to reduce the "need" but not the number of abortions? In that case, is he okay with "unneeded" abortions?

Note what Obama said in his speech at Notre Dame:

“So let us work together to reduce the number of women seeking abortions. ...”

Abortion advocates object to the phrase “reducing abortions.” It connotes that there is something bad or immoral about abortion. Melody’s background as a board member of one of the most hard-core abortion groups in the country (Emily’s List even opposes bans on partial-birth abortion) sheds light on why she was irritated when that was stated as her boss’ goal.

The Los Angeles Times reported in 2004 that Democrats, after losing the presidential election, began rethinking their harsh, no compromise stance on abortion. Their solution?

Change their language but not their position.

The LA Times interviewed me on this strategy and reported: “Wright said it was too early to know whether Democrats would change their votes on upcoming antiabortion legislation, or would only change the way they speak of abortion. She said the comments of some party leaders led her to believe that ‘it would just be changing of wording, just trying to repackage in order to be more appealing -- really, to trick people.’”

Howard Dean, then head of the Democratic National Committee, validated my concern. He told NBC's Tim Russert: "We can change our vocabulary, but I don't think we ought to change our principles."

By all his actions so far, Obama is following this plan.

Obama needs to be honest with Americans. Is it true that it is not his goal to reduce the number of abortions?

More importantly, will he do anything that will reduce abortions? Actions are far more important than words.

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