



## Obama Administration Covering Up Abortion Data

by Erick Erickson ([more by this author](#))

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*Let's be clear: promoting science isn't just about providing resources – it is also about protecting free and open inquiry. It is about letting scientists ... do their jobs, free from manipulation or coercion, and listening to what they tell us, even when it's inconvenient – especially when it's inconvenient. It is about ensuring that scientific data is never distorted or concealed to serve a political agenda – and that we make scientific decisions based on facts, not ideology. -President Obama, March 9, 2009.*

RedState has uncovered evidence - confirmed by the CDC's own press office - that the Obama administration is deliberately playing "hide the ball" on nationwide abortion statistics. For apparently the first time in 40 years, the CDC's annual "Abortion Surveillance Report" was not published, and there are "no plans" for the data to be produced at this time.

Whatever you feel about abortion and its legality, virtually all people agree that transparency and factual accuracy are important in the abortion debate. That is why even Planned Parenthood spends a substantial amount of money each year funding the Guttmacher Institute's studies on abortion statistics. While pro-life groups have long contended that Guttmacher's methods systematically undercount abortions, that is beside the point; the Guttmacher studies have long provided a consistent source for studying abortion trends over time. Which aggregate data, we re-emphasize, is important not only for both sides of the ideological debate, but is also important medical information.

Yet, in the wake of numerous damaging disclosures about unscrupulous practices by abortionists (from Kermit Gosnell to Planned Parenthood clinics across the country), the Obama Administration has apparently ordered that the only Federal government report on abortion statistics – again, a report that has run continuously for 40 years – be deep-sixed. The immediate question this raises is: what is the Obama administration

trying to hide?

Here's the background: Beginning in 1969 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention collected data on legal abortions carried out in the United States through its Abortion Surveillance System. The report based on this data ordinarily appeared as an article in CDC's professional journal, The Mortality and Morbidity Weekly Report (MMWR) the week after Thanksgiving. The report lagged the data by three years, i.e., the 2006 data were printed in 2009.

The report was produced by the cooperative efforts of the Guttmacher Institute and statisticians at the CDC.

The report has never been all-encompassing because collecting data on abortions is a state function, and not every state cooperates. In the 2006 reports, California, Louisiana, and New Hampshire did not provide data. Until 2005, Alaska and Oklahoma also declined to participate.

While not comprehensive, the CDC report provided the best single estimate of abortions in the US, as well as providing detailed breakdowns: the age of the baby at the time of abortion, age of the mother, number of abortions the mother had previous to the current one, etc. People on both sides of the abortion debate have cited these statistics to make their points. Here at RedState, we frequently posted articles on this report, examining the statistical trends on abortion. We were particularly interested in this year's report in light of the widely publicized stories indicating that over 40% of pregnancies in New York City are ended by abortion.

Last year, contrary to the long-established practice, November came and went with no report posted on the CDC's website. Over the following weeks, multiple visits to the site proved fruitless. The possibility the report was not merely delayed, but had in fact been axed from higher up, had to be considered.

Last week, RedState began investigating by calling those in DC who might have some answers. After several attempts, we finally received confirmation from Rhonda Smith at the CDC's press office in Atlanta that the report has been buried indefinitely; the CDC "will not have stats available at any time in the near future" and there "are no plans for them to come out any time soon." This call took place on Jan. 27th, and we asked Ms. Smith for a reason that the report wouldn't be issued anymore. She promised to check around and find out if there was any reason given and get back to us – as of the date of

this posting, we have received no further communication from her office.

This revelation is nothing short of shocking. Most of the leg work for this study is actually done by Guttmacher – all it costs the CDC is some manpower to assemble the statistics and write up the report. In the overall scope of the CDC’s budget, this report barely even registers. So what is the CDC trying to hide? The only reasonable conclusion to be drawn here is that someone higher up has made the decision to actively eliminate the only official report on abortion statistics in the country, just because they don’t want abortion being talked about.

This action is indefensible and contrary to the Obama administration’s repeated promises of transparency and the removal of politics from accurate scientific reporting. And it is more damning than any report: it reflects the reality that the Obama Administration is afraid of the truth, afraid that the American people cannot be trusted to support legal abortion if they look closely at the facts.

Suppression of this nature doesn’t have to stand. A senate aide tells RedState that if the administration or the CDC are stonewalling on this, “Congress would have a range of options to force them to disclose this information including hearings, letters and floor amendments.”

We urge Congress to investigate this apparent cover-up. Transparency and consistency are not a partisan issue. The CDC report is objective statistical data that should be produced regardless of any potential political implications.

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Mr. Erickson is the managing editor at [RedState](http://RedState.com).

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