



LIFE MATTERS

The Newsletter of the Respect Life Office of the Diocese of Rockford
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Abortion advocates try again

On February 11, 2010 pro-abortion forces in Illinois once again introduced the so-called Reproductive Health and Access Act (HB 6205). Like last year's version (HB 2354), this bill would establish abortion as a fundamental right and would do away with any common sense restrictions on abortion.

We rely on the trusted expertise of the Catholic Conference of Illinois (CCI) to provide us with accurate assessments of various bills that impact the life issues. Shortly after the introduction of HB 6205, we received a fact sheet and talking points from CCI which we immediately sent to our Parish Respect Life Coordinators (PRLCs).

However, as we want to make certain all the faithful are properly informed, we are using this edition of *Life Matters* to include both the fact sheet and the talking points in their entirety.

CCI Fact Sheet on HB 6205:

HB 6205 represents a RADICAL departure from current Illinois law regarding abortion, public funding of abortion, health care right of conscience, parental notification and "comprehensive" sex education.

NO STATE OR LOCAL "INTERFERENCE"!

Section 15 states that notwithstanding any other current law (Healthcare Right of Conscience Act and Parental Notification of Abortion Act) neither the state nor any political subdivision may "interfere" with access to abortion. This section is designed to set up legal challenges to undermine the Health Care Right of Conscience and Parental Notification Acts. Section 40 does not offer real protection to the Parental Notice of Abortion Act.

PUBLIC FUNDING OF ABORTION & EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION!

SECTION 20 requires the public funding of abortions via state Medicaid and other state

medical assistance programs, perhaps even including state employee's health insurance plans. In addition to abortion, this section will require these programs to pay for other "reproductive healthcare" — including contraception, in vitro fertilization, fertility treatments, etc.

BROAD IMMUNITY PROTECTIONS!

Section 25 affords medical professionals performing abortion unprecedented liability protections.

REQUIRED "COMPREHENSIVE" SEX EDUCATION!

Section 30 mandates public school districts to offer comprehensive sex education. Local control would be undermined by this new mandate. In addition, the bill amends the Comprehensive Health Education Program to delete references to abstinence "until marriage." This program applies to public and private schools, meaning Catholic schools would be prohibited by law from teaching Catholic values.

REQUIRED TO BE BROADLY INTERPRETED!

Our reading is not too broad: Section 35 requires the law and subsequent rules to be "liberally construed."

The CCI concludes its fact sheet with this statement: **A vote for the Reproductive Health and Access Act is a vote FOR public funding of abortion and AGAINST Right of Conscience and Parental Notification!**

CCI "Talking Points" on HB 6205:

This legislation seeks to create a "fundamental right" to abortion and deny the state or any political subdivision the right to any common sense regulation of access to abortion.

In the 1992 *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* decision, the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed a

state's right to regulate access to abortion.

Section 15 of the legislation states that notwithstanding any other current law (Healthcare Right of Conscience Act and Parental Notification of Abortion Act) neither the state nor any political subdivision may "interfere" with access to abortion.

- The proponents of this legislation obviously believe Health Care Rights of Conscience and Parental Notification can and will be construed as "interference."
- The enactment of this legislation will lead to a cause of action against the state and the Health Care Right of Conscience and Parental Notification Acts.
- Section 40 does not alleviate the conflict created between this section and the Parental Notification of Abortion Act.

Section 20 requires that any individual eligible for "state medical assistance" receive assistance for reproductive healthcare. Any lack of such assistance will be construed as "interference" prohibited by Section 11.

- This section demands public funds be used to procure abortions—through Medicaid, other state medical assistance programs and state health insurance plans.
- In addition to abortion, this section will require the state to pay for other "reproductive healthcare"—including contraception, in vitro fertilization, fertility treatments, etc.—for those eligible for Medicaid or any other state health insurance program or plan.
- How will the state pay for this with a \$12.5 billion budget deficit?

Section 25 affords medical professionals unprecedented liability protections in performing abortions. Why should a medical professional "not be liable for civil damages or subject to criminal penalty relating to a pregnancy termination" if the law otherwise calls for it?

Section 30 mandates public school districts to offer comprehensive sex education. Current law allows local school districts to decide when and how to offer sex education. Local control would

be undermined by this new mandate.

Section 35 requires the Act and subsequent rules be "liberally construed." Our interpretation is not too broad; in fact, it is probably not broad enough.

Section 55 amends the Comprehensive Health Education Program statute to delete all references to teaching abstinence "until marriage." This statute applies to public and private schools. How can the General Assembly demand religious schools teach subjects contrary to moral teachings?

What can we do?

Every faithful Catholic is encouraged to contact their State Representative and respectfully say, "House Bill 6205 seeks to publicly fund abortion, undermine the Health Care Right of Conscience and Parental Notification of Abortion Acts and impose comprehensive sex education on all students, K-12, in this state. It is extreme, unnecessary legislation. Please vote NO."

To find your state representative, go to www.ilga.gov and under "Additional Resources" click on "Legislator Lookup." You can then search by entering your nine-digit zip code.

You could also contact the Illinois State board of elections at 217.782.4141.

To download the CCI "Talking Points" or "Fact Sheet" on HB 6205, go to:

www.catholicconferenceofillinois.org

If you haven't already done so, contact your Parish Respect Life Coordinator (PRLC) to sign up for your parish e-mail tree. You will then be notified when additional information is released or for additional calls for action.

For additional commentary on the life issues, check out "Life Lines," on the first Friday of each month in *The Observer*.

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