

CATHOLIC CONFERENCE OF OHIO

Testimony in Support of HB 79

November 29, 2011

Thank you, Chairman Bacon, Ranking Minority Member, Schiavoni and members of the Senate Insurance committee. My name is Jim Tobin. I am an Associate Director with the Catholic Conference of Ohio. The Catholic Conference of Ohio supports passage of HB 79. We believe protecting the lives of unborn children is a fundamental human rights issue, and that there should not be state financial support for any nontherapeutic abortions. Catholic teaching affirms the sacredness and dignity of every human life from conception to natural death, as well as the need for legislative and legal recognition and protection of all persons, especially unborn children.

HB 79 pursues the provision in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) that allows a state to prohibit nontherapeutic abortion coverage in their health benefit exchange program. We support such a pursuit.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops supported many features within the PPACA. The law significantly expanded health care accessibility and affordability to tens of millions of uninsured Americans. However, the Catholic bishops opposed final passage, in part, because it expands the role of the federal government in funding and facilitating abortion and plans that cover abortion. The statute appropriates billions of dollars in new funding without explicitly prohibiting the use of these funds for abortion, and it provides federal subsidies for health plans covering elective abortions. Its failure to preserve the legal status quo that has regulated the government's relation to abortion undermines what has been the law of our land for decades. It ignores the consensus of the majority of Americans: that federal funds not be used for abortions or plans that cover abortions (Hyde Amendment). Additionally, the PPACA statute requires all those who choose federally subsidized plans that cover abortion to pay for other peoples' abortions with their own funds.

We believe passage of HB 79 will address such concerns. Thank you for this opportunity.