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## STATEMENT ON SENATE BILL 1564

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As originally proposed, Senate Bill 1564 would have gutted the Illinois Health Care Right of Conscience Act. Although the original bill had sufficient support for passage in the legislature, the Catholic Conference of Illinois was successful in negotiating removal of the more problematic provisions of the bill.

Consequently, the Catholic Conference of Illinois is neutral on Senate Bill 1564 as amended by Amendment #3 in the Senate. Amendment #3 protects the right of conscience for healthcare professionals and facilities. They can still refuse to perform, assist, counsel, suggest, pay for, recommend, refer or participate in any form of medical practice or health care service that is contrary to his or her conscience.

What will be "new" is an information protocol that says when a conscience objection is invoked, the patient's condition, prognosis and treatment options will be discussed. This is already standard medical practice at Catholic healthcare facilities. If the patient insists on a morally objectionable service, a list of healthcare providers without specific reference to any particular service will be given to the patient to seek out different medical consultations. In our opinion, this list does not constitute a direct referral nor does it guarantee an outcome.

Even with these protections, we would rather not alter the law in any way. It is important to recognize that neutrality does not mean support. However, considering the current realities of politics in our state, we believe that refusing everything but the status quo was going to lead to a much worse result.

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*The Catholic Conference of Illinois was created in 1969 to serve as the public policy voice of the Illinois bishops and the six dioceses of the state: Belleville, Chicago, Joliet, Peoria, Rockford and Springfield-in-Illinois.*