



108 E. Cook St.  
Springfield, IL 62704  
Ph. 217-528-9200

[www.ilcatholic.org](http://www.ilcatholic.org)  
Diocese of Belleville  
Archdiocese of Chicago  
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## WRITTEN TESTIMONY FOR HB 4452

March 20, 2026

To the Honorable Chairman Ford, Minority Spokesman Severin and Members of the Appropriations - Higher Education Committee:

The Catholic Conference of Illinois supports House Bill 4452, the Community Hospice and Palliative Care Professional Loan Repayment Program Act. As the legislation provides, HB 4452 will aid hospice and palliative care programs recruit and retain qualified professionals, along with addressing this State's community-based hospice and palliative care workforce shortage.

According to the Center to Advance Palliative Care (CAPC)'s scorecard, while palliative care is available in most urban areas, programming is not as prevalent in suburban, and especially, rural areas. Addressing these disparities in access to critical health services for people who have serious illnesses or who are nearing the end of life is imperative for compassionately caring for Illinoisans no matter where they live.

Considering the passage of Assisted Suicide in Illinois, the Catholic Conference of Illinois supports programs that will grow palliative care and hospice programming. Palliative care is a field of medicine that focuses on caring for the whole person and their caregivers—physically, emotionally, socially and spiritually — and is appropriate for anyone with a serious illness. Ensuring there is a sufficient statewide hospice and palliative care workforce will allow patients and their families to have meaningful support during any chronic illness or at the end of life.

Thank you for your consideration and support for HB 4452.

Jeanette Malafa

Catholic Conference of Illinois, Director of Government Relations