

MOST REV. DANIEL R. JENKY, C.S.C.
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP
DIOCESE OF PEORIA



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP
419 N.E. MADISON AVENUE
PEORIA, ILLINOIS 61603
PHONE: 309-671-1550
FAX: 309-671-1576

February 14, 2017

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I am writing to alert you about a bill that is pending before the Illinois legislature that, if passed, would use your tax dollars to pay for the taking of an innocent human life through an abortion. The bill is HB 40, and I am told that it may pass if there is not a strong outcry against it.

Since the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court decision of *Roe vs. Wade*, our country has endured the termination of more than 57 million lives. We are working hard to build a culture of life by advocating for laws that make it easier to bring a child into this world. And we are succeeding – the national abortion rate is at its lowest since *Roe v. Wade* was handed down. Unfortunately, the enactment of House Bill 40 would set back those efforts by coercing all who pay taxes to indirectly support the taking of innocent human life. It is worth noting that abortion is an elective procedure and using state tax dollars to pay for it is not only immoral, but also an injustice. A far better use of tax money would be to fund prenatal services for the poor and child care for working mothers, as well as expand health care options for those in need.

House Bill 40 not only mandates state support of abortion, but it would also include abortion coverage in state employees' health care plans and the Medicaid program. Additionally, the bill allows taxpayer money to fund grants to organizations that refer, counsel for and perform abortions – otherwise known as Planned Parenthood.

It should be noted that this radical and totally unnecessary change in law in favor of the abortion industry would take place in a state government that hasn't had a budget in two years and is already facing catastrophic financial challenges.

The Catholic Conference of Illinois, which serves as the public policy arm of the Catholic bishops, has long joined with Catholic Charities and Catholic health care organizations to advocate that essential services be funded. However, as we have seen over the past few years and in the current budget stalemate, their efforts have largely been ignored by state lawmakers and officials. We have to ask why our elected representatives would turn their backs on paying for programs that help the disabled, the elderly, children in need and students, yet find the will to publicly fund the terrible tragedy of abortion. Please contact your state representative to vote against this bill.

If you need assistance in determining the name of your lawmaker, or in sending a message to him or her, go to www.ilcatholic.org or call the Catholic Conference at its Chicago office at 312-368-1066 or its Springfield office at 217-528-9200.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

✠Most Reverend Daniel R. Jenky, C.S.C.
BISHOP OF PEORIA