



Catholic Conference of Illinois Press Conference Comments of Dr. Jillian Stalling, Obstetrics and Gynecology March 28, 2019

My name is Jillian Stalling, and I am an obstetrician/gynecologist with OSF HealthCare in Peoria. I am speaking today as my role as Illinois director of the Catholic Medical Association and as a member of the Illinois Catholic Healthcare Association.

OSF HealthCare operates 13 hospitals across Illinois and Michigan. Our focus is to serve people with the greatest care and love in a community that celebrates the gift of life.

In fact, that's part of our mission statement – we celebrate the gift of life. So, I was shocked when I learned of proposed legislation that would toss aside that gift and eliminate current and specific protections that doctors, nurses and hospitals have when refusing to perform an abortion.

Part of House Bill 2495 and Senate Bill 1942 would repeal the Illinois Abortion Performance Refusal Act. This law protects health care professionals and hospitals from any legal action when they refuse to participate in an abortion.

As physicians, we take an oath to do no harm. We offer patients an objective treatment plan based upon medical training and scientific testing. It has been a longstanding practice, however, to respect doctors' rights of conscience when they are asked to perform a morally objectionable procedure.

I am alarmed by the statement in the legislation that an embryo or fetus has no independent rights. This is exploitive language that can be used to attack any legislation that protects the unborn.

I love taking care of women and delivering babies. If this legislation passes, I am not going to leave the medical profession and abandon women who need good health care. But I will refuse to participate in an abortion.

I ask lawmakers to preserve our conscience rights and reject this legislation.

Thank you.

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