



Catholic Conference  
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## **Catholic Conference of Illinois Statement on SB 3572**

SB 3572 would allow criminal penalties, including possibly felony charges, for a woman who has an abortion. The Catholic Conference of Illinois (CCI), along with many other organizations that advocate for an end to abortion are opposed to this bill.

We pray for the day when abortion will no longer be considered an option to end a pregnancy and we work on different strategies to get us to that day, but criminalizing women who have an abortion is not an approach we endorse in any manner.

Abortion is considered a grave moral evil and a sin, but not all sins require criminal penalties. Compassion, not a desire to punish, should be our response.

The pro-life ministries of the Church provide care for pregnant women in need - through compassion, healing and redemption. Since *Roe v. Wade*, we have been reaching out to women in need to provide care and assistance. For more than sixty years, we have found the most effective and loving way to end abortion is to build a culture that provides women with the necessary material and loving support to bring a child into this world.

In addition, the tragedy of abortion is not limited to the unborn child who loses their life. The mother who aborts her child is also a victim, which is why making her a criminal is especially damaging to her, her family and society.

Women are often coerced or feel as though abortion is their only option. After the abortion, the clinic staff is gone and friends who know about the abortion may hesitate to bring up the subject. Relationships with a boyfriend, partner or husband often dissolve. Charging women with crimes that may result in a prison sentence is not something the criminal justice system is equipped to handle and will only serve to further isolate and punish a woman who needs our love and support.