



WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

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GOVERNOR WALKER SIGNS ABORTION BAN IN STATE EMPLOYEE INSURANCE PLANS

On April 3, Governor Walker signed Assembly Bill 128 (Rep. André Jacque, R-De Pere) into law as 2017 Wisconsin Act 191. The Act bans abortion coverage in public employee insurance policies by prohibiting Wisconsin's Group Insurance Board from entering into any contract with respect to a group health insurance plan or providing a group health insurance plan on a self-insured basis if, with certain exceptions, the plan provides abortion services to state employees under the Wisconsin Retirement System.

The Wisconsin Catholic Conference supported the legislation.

“This new law affirms that taxpayer funds held by public authorities should not subsidize the performance of abortions,” said Barbara Sella, WCC Associate Director for Respect Life and Social Concerns. “Twenty-one other states have similar restrictions, as does the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program.”

Some argue that the new law will have a disproportionate effect on women who have low incomes, have disabilities, or are members of minority groups. However, Sella stressed that “The Catholic Church understands the challenges that these women face and insists that the private and public sectors do more to help women and children in need. So, while every unborn child deserves protection, every woman deserves support to carry her child to term and, if she so chooses, to raise her child.”

“All pregnant women deserve the best pre-natal care, maternity leave, child care, and the necessary assistance if they have a child with special needs,” Sella concluded.

The WCC is grateful for the work of legislators, advocates, and concerned residents who urged support for this necessary legislation.