



WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BILLS PROMOTING HUMAN DIGNITY MOVE THROUGH LEGISLATURE

The Wisconsin Catholic Conference (WCC), the public policy voice of the bishops of Wisconsin, joined pro-life supporters and advocates in witnessing Governor Scott Walker sign Assembly Bill 310 into law as [2015 Wisconsin Act 151](#). The WCC had offered testimony in support of Assembly Bill 310 (Rep. André Jacque, R-De Pere) and its companion Senate Bill 237 (Sen. Chris Kapenga, R-Delafield), which requires the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) to apply for funds under Title X of the federal Public Health Service Act. Title X funds are used to provide family planning and related preventive health services (e.g., cancer, diabetes) for low-income women and men. Under the newly-signed Act 151, any funds awarded to the DHS must be distributed through a system of priority that prohibits public entities from distributing funds to any private, non-profit entity that provides abortion services or has an affiliate that provides abortion services.

In effect, the bill would prohibit Title X funds awarded to the DHS from going to Planned Parenthood, which currently receives \$3.5 annually from this program. Planned Parenthood may continue to apply for the funds directly to the federal government.

In testimony, the WCC noted that “[a]s responsible citizens, we acknowledge that the government should not establish a religion. But neither should government programs promote health care entities and practices that fail to uphold and adhere to the first principle of medicine, to do no harm. There are a myriad of providers that can meet women’s health needs without invoking ethical inconsistencies. As a society, we should champion these providers by making certain they gain access to the funds necessary to serve women in need.”

WCC Executive Director Kim Wadas thanked the bills’ authors, legislative leaders, and the Governor at the bill’s signing, noting that enactment of this proposal will ensure that health care in Wisconsin is devoted to prevention, diagnosis, and care, not termination of life.

The WCC also supported Senate Bill 618 (Sen. Sheila Harsdorf, R-River Falls) and its companion, Assembly Bill 737 (Rep. Amy Loudenbeck, R-Clinton), which adds child sex trafficking to the definition of “abuse” in the Children’s Code so that sex trafficked children may receive services that are available to other victims of child abuse. The bill also requires the sheriff or police department to refer all cases of child sex trafficking to a child protection agency for investigation. The Senate and Assembly passed SB 618, which now awaits the Governor’s action.

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