



WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

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WCC TESTIFIES ON BILLS RELATED TO INFORMING PATIENTS ON FETAL PAIN, UMBILICAL CORD BLOOD DONATION

The Wisconsin Catholic Conference lent its support to two proposals considered at a public hearing on April 19 by the Senate Committee on Health, Children, Families Aging and Long Term Care.

One proposal, Senate Bill 138, expands Wisconsin's Informed Consent for Abortion Law to include information regarding pain experienced by the unborn child during an abortion procedure. WCC supported the bill in written [testimony](#) submitted by Kathy Markeland, Associate Director for Respect Life and Health Care issues.

SB 138 would require disclosure of this additional information when the gestational age of an unborn child is determined to be 20 weeks or more. In 2003, 201 pregnancy terminations occurred after 20 weeks.

“Much of our knowledge about the pain experienced by unborn children comes from studies on unborn and premature infants undergoing surgical procedures to benefit their development,” Markeland wrote. “As medical science has advanced the capacity to beneficially treat the unborn at earlier stages of development, the question of pain has become an area of increasing interest. SB 138 incorporates into Wisconsin law commonly held scientific understandings regarding fetal development and routine procedures currently practiced by doctors treating unborn patients.”

“Unborn children are vulnerable human beings. Pregnant women are also vulnerable. While there may be division within society regarding the best way to serve pregnant women, certainly there should be broad agreement that withholding relevant medical information is a fundamental disservice,” she concluded.

The WCC also registered its support for SB 127 that would require doctors to inform pregnant women that they can donate their umbilical cord blood to a cord blood center. Blood donated to such a facility will be available for use in treatments and medical research.

“Umbilical cord blood is a rich, ethically acceptable resource for adult stem cells. These stem cells are already treating life-threatening diseases. Increasing the number of donors will directly benefit patients today and build a resource of stem cells for ongoing research and discovery into the future.” Markeland explained.