



WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

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WCC-BACKED BILL TO KEEP ABORTION OUT OF HEALTH EXCHANGES PASSES SENATE

The State Senate gave its approval to legislation to prohibit health insurance providers that participate in future state exchanges from including elective abortions in their coverage. The proposal, Senate Bill 92, sponsored by State Senator Rich Zipperer (R-Pewaukee) passed the Senate on a 17-16 party line vote.

The Wisconsin Catholic Conference (WCC) had offered testimony in support of the bill at a public hearing last May.

“As we said at the public hearing, the Catholic Church has been a voice for universal access to health care. The Church has long advocated that public funds be used to help the needy obtain health care and health insurance,” WCC Associate Director Barbara Sella said after the vote. “Abortion, however, is not health care. No other medical procedure deliberately terminates a human life. Women and children deserve health care, not abortion.”

The federal health care reform legislation enacted last year requires states to create exchanges to offer health insurance consistent with the new law by January of 2014. States that fail to create such exchanges will use an exchange developed by the federal government. The federal law also provides that states have the option of excluding abortion coverage from health plans participating in the state exchange. Senate Bill 92 creates that exclusion.

Other supporters of Senate Bill 92 are Wisconsin Right to Life, Pro-Life Wisconsin, Ministry Health Care, and Wisconsin Family Action. Opponents of the bill include NARAL Pro-Choice Wisconsin, Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin, and the ACLU.

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