



WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

TO: Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

FROM: Barbara Sella, Associate Director

DATE: October 17, 2017

RE: SB 154 – Abortion Prohibitions for UW Employees

The Wisconsin Catholic Conference, the public policy voice of Wisconsin's bishops, strongly supports Senate Bill 154.

This bill would prohibit the University of Wisconsin (UW) System or the University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority from allowing their employees to perform or assist in the performance of an abortion outside of a hospital setting. In short, the bill would put an end to Wisconsin taxpayer support for elective abortions.

By paying employees to work at Planned Parenthood, the UW is, in essence, jointly operating an abortion facility, which violates both the letter and the spirit of Wisconsin Statutes s. 20.927. At a minimum, public authorities should not be facilitating the unjust taking of human life.

Pope Francis has captured the world's attention for embracing the most marginalized people; for warning against a "throwaway culture" that discards unwanted persons as though they were consumer goods; and for insisting that we can never "solve a problem by eliminating a person." These are not uniquely Catholic or even religious ideas. They are reflections of the deepest humanity and should inspire all of us to set our sights higher.

As the state's leading medical research and teaching institution, the UW is called to solve problems in a way that upholds human dignity and protects human life. Elective abortion, even if legal, denies the life and dignity of the unborn child. That is not what the Wisconsin Idea is about. Rather than taking human lives, the tradition of our state and the mission of the UW are best served by exclusively healing and saving lives.

Senate Bill 154 does what government ought to do: protect the living. It upholds and strengthens Wis. Stat. s. 20.927.

We strongly urge you to support this reasonable bill.