



WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

TO: Senator Chris Kapenga, Chair
Members, Senate Committee on Licensing, Regulatory Reform, State & Federal Affairs

FROM: Tia Izzia, Associate Director for Human Life & Social Concerns

DATE: November 5, 2025

RE: Support for Senate Bill 553, Limitations on the Definition of Abortion

The Wisconsin Catholic Conference, the public policy voice of the Catholic bishops of Wisconsin, urges you to support Senate Bill 553, which provides definitional clarity in Wisconsin abortion law.

This bill offers a clear and comprehensive explanation of what is not an abortion. Abortion does not include a physician's performance of a medical procedure or treatment designed or intended to prevent the death of a pregnant woman and not designed or intended to kill her child. Abortion does not include an early induction or cesarean section performed due to a medical emergency, miscarriage, or stillbirth, or an ectopic, anembryonic, or molar pregnancy.

This bill makes abundantly clear what every pregnant woman in Wisconsin needs: for her physician to make reasonable medical efforts to preserve both her life and the life of her child, according to reasonable medical judgment and appropriate interventions for the gestational age of her child.

The practice of health care should be centered on caring for both patients—two distinct human beings—a woman and her child. We know that in very rare instances, a medical procedure that saves a mother's life has the unintended consequence of leading to a birth in which the child does not survive. Yet, even in those cases, every effort is still made to save the child's life, even though the child's death may be an unintended consequence of the intervention. When the death of a preborn child is imminent, perinatal hospice and palliative care provide families with a nonviolent way to care for their child and grieve a premature death. Catholic hospitals have led the way in caring for women and children in these very complicated cases and know how to care for both.

Just laws distinguish between intentional and unintentional acts, even when the result of the act is the same. For example, accidentally hitting a pedestrian in a crosswalk and intentionally running that pedestrian down are not the same nor are they treated the same in the law.

Where human lives are concerned, this is all the more critical. Abortion is the *intentional* taking of a human life. If a child has already died in the womb, as in a miscarriage or stillbirth, removing that child is not taking its life. If a mother and child must be separated to save the mother's life, it is not intentionally taking a child's life when every effort is made to save them both.

When those who support abortion make a false equivalence between intentional abortion to kill the child and removal of child who has miscarried, women may hesitate to seek appropriate medical care. And women who have miscarried can be shocked to hear that they had an abortion, when that is certainly not the case. Promoting a false equivalence undermines just laws and efforts to protect human life. It undermines efforts to offer compassionate, life-affirming support to women and families facing loss.

When those who support abortion further contend that this bill's clarity is meant to confuse, this is an intentional obfuscation of the truth. This bill provides the clarity that opponents do not want: abortion, the intentional killing of a preborn child, is never medically necessary to save a woman's life.

This bill does what we have always needed: to embrace both woman and child, rather than pitting them against each other. In the words of Pope Francis, we can never "solve a problem by eliminating a person" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 214). This is not a uniquely Catholic or even religious idea. This is just common sense.

We commend the authors for bringing this bill forward for the good of Wisconsin's women and children. Thank you for hearing this bill today and we respectfully urge you to support this legislation.