



WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

TESTIMONY REGARDING ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION 130: PERSONHOOD AMENDMENT

Presented by Kim Vercauteren, Executive Director

February 12, 2020

On behalf of the Roman Catholic bishops of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Catholic Conference (WCC) greatly appreciates the opportunity to offer testimony for information today on Assembly Joint Resolution 130, which would amend our state Constitution and define personhood to include unborn children.

The Catholic Church fully recognizes the inherent dignity of every human being. From the moment of conception, we are created in God's image and are deserving of respect and protection until natural death.

How best to uphold this dignity is sometimes a matter of prudential judgement. While pro-life advocates work hard to make abortion unthinkable, to overturn unjust laws, and to enact protective laws for both women and their unborn children, not everyone agrees on the means for achieving these ends.

While the WCC fully supports the intent of AJR 130 – the protection of all human life from conception to natural death – serious questions remain as to whether this resolution as drafted will achieve this goal. For example, how would amending our state Constitution affect existing state pro-life laws and what implications would it have for federal laws and jurisprudence? Is redefining “person” in our state Constitution the only or the surest way to protect unborn children? We just don't know.

What we do know is that pro-life people within our state – all in good conscience – disagree on the impact of this proposed amendment. As there are good arguments to be made on both sides, the WCC is not taking a position on AJR 130. Catholics are free to support or oppose it as their formed consciences and judgement dictate, so long as they remain committed to upholding the life and dignity of every human being from conception to natural death.

On this most contentious issue of abortion, we urge everyone to respect legitimate differences, while doing everything to help women and their unborn children.

Thank you.