



## WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

TO: Senator André Jacqué  
Members, Senate Committee on Human Services, Children & Families

FROM: Barbara Sella, Associate Director, Wisconsin Catholic Conference

DATE: May 26, 2021

RE: Support for SB 260, Abortion Prohibitions for UW Employees &  
SB 261, Sex, Fetal Anomaly, and Abortion Facilities

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The Wisconsin Catholic Conference, the public policy voice of Wisconsin's bishops, appreciates the opportunity to offer testimony in support of Senate Bill 260 and Senate Bill 261.

Senate Bill 260 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 UW participation in elective abortions.

By permitting 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.

As the state's leading medical research and teaching institution, the UW is called to solve problems in ways that uphold human dignity and protect 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 261 would require the state to collect information about the visible sex and disability of the aborted child, as well as the facility where the abortion took place. It is vital that Wisconsin have comprehensive data on abortions because this can inform the public, lawmakers, and public health officials about why abortions are taking place and allow us to better address the challenges expectant mothers face. The WCC fully supports maintaining the anonymity of the mother. We have always held that most women are driven to abortion out of duress and for lack of appropriate support. It is up to the entire community to give women real alternatives and to support them in their time of need.

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 everyone to ensure that mother and child can flourish, whatever the child's sex, disability, or unwanted conception may be.

Senate Bills 260 and 261 do what government ought to do: protect the living. We urge you to support them.

Thank you.