



WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

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WCC TESTIFIES ON FOUR BILLS AFFECTING HEALTH INCLUDING PROHIBITING GENDER TRANSITION FOR MINORS AND REQUIRING AGE VERIFICATION FOR PORNOGRAPHY

On March 12, the Wisconsin Catholic Conference (WCC), the public policy voice of Wisconsin's Catholic bishops, offered testimony on four separate bills, affecting the health of all ages of people throughout Wisconsin.

Support for Prohibiting Gender Transitioning for Minors

Associate Director David Earleywine [testified in support](#) of [AB 104](#), which prohibits puberty suppressants, cross-sex hormones, and gender transition surgery for minors struggling with gender dysphoria. Earleywine began by articulating the Catholic Church's teaching on this issue.

As Catholics, we believe that every human being is made in the image and likeness of God and is deserving of dignity, respect, and compassion. We recognize the anguish of children as they wrestle with severe gender dysphoria, as well as their parents. They are members of our families and communities and often suffer in silence. We must treat all people with love and respect and accompany them with compassion and truth.

We support this bill because gender transitioning of children upends the natural development of the human person and sends the message that some bodies are mistakes that can be manipulated at will.

Earleywine further testified that while others claimed, "surgical and hormonal interventions are safe and save lives ... there are no long-term studies that show this." This was backed up by a 2022 Reuters [article](#), which stated that "Ever since the first clinic to offer gender care to minors in the United States opened in Boston 15 years ago, none of the leading providers have published any systematic, long-term studies tracking outcomes for all patients." He also noted that "European countries that once were at the forefront of gender transitioning for children have now scaled back in the face of adverse outcomes and criticisms that their earlier interventions were rushed."

In short, true health care seeks to restore and rehabilitate the proper functioning of the human body, not suppress it. Earleywine closed by stating, "Guardrails, such as Assembly Bill 104, are needed so that children experiencing gender dysphoria are given the time, space, and support they need to mature naturally into adulthood."

Support for Requiring Age Verification for Pornography

Earleywine also [testified in support](#) of [AB 105](#), which prohibits business entities from knowingly and intentionally publishing or distributing material harmful to minors on the internet without performing a reasonable age verification method to verify the age of individuals attempting to access the website. Earleywine cited the Catechism of the Catholic Church’s teaching on pornography, which states that pornography “does grave injury to the dignity of the participants (actors, vendors, the public), since each one becomes an object of base pleasure and illicit profit for others. It immerses all who are involved in the illusion of a fantasy world. It is a grave offense.”

Earleywine provided studies demonstrating the harms of pornography, especially to children. One 2023 study found that exposure to pornography promoted teen dating violence, female victimization, and “behavioral changes in adolescents ... including the adoption of unsafe sexual practices.” The study also found that rapes, violent crimes, and sexual assaults were higher in adolescents who spent greater time viewing pornography. Lastly, the study reported THAT pornography could lead to “teen pregnancies as a result of unsafe sexual practices emulating the online content.”

Earleywine closed by explaining that regulation to protect minors is common practice. “Minors must present an ID when attempting to purchase tobacco and alcohol. The same should be required when they attempt to access online porn.”

By July 1, 2025, 20 states will have age verification laws and another 17 will have introduced similar legislation.

Opposition to Permitting Pharmacists to Prescribe Certain Contraceptives

Associate Director Tia Izzia [testified in opposition](#) to [SB 42](#), which allows pharmacists to prescribe certain hormonal contraceptives. Izzia explained that under the bill there are no requirements that a pharmacist test for pregnancy, order diagnostic exams that would provide a comprehensive assessment of a woman’s current health status or even have access to a woman’s complete medical history and records—all of which normally inform the medical decision-making process. She noted that contraceptives have been associated with serious health risks, including depression, venous thromboembolism (VTE), stroke, heart attack, breast and cervical cancer, and more. In short, the bill could compromise patient safety.

Izzia also emphasized that “fertility is not a disorder or disease.” She explained that:

[N]ow that there are extremely effective fertility-awareness-based methods, such as the Marquette Method developed here in Wisconsin, which give women the tools they need to understand and work with their own reproductive health, the State of Wisconsin should not be pushing for the expansion of powerful artificial drugs. It is time for public policy to turn toward empowering women to understand their fertility, rather than masking it and pushing abortion if it fails.

Opposition to Creating a Palliative Care Council

Izzia also [testified in opposition](#) to [SB 39](#), which would create a state Palliative Care Council. “The Catholic Church supports the use of quality palliative care for those who are gravely ill and/or at the end of life.” However, Izzia went on to share that “there are growing testimonies of palliative care that has hastened death” and that the bill “does nothing to prohibit the actual practice of hastening someone’s death, especially via the overuse of sedatives and opiates.” Thus, Izzia urged the committee to amend the bill to “state that palliative care excludes intentionally hastening, assisting in, or causing a person’s death.” In asking to amend this bill, the WCC wishes to support the future of quality palliative care in Wisconsin, for as Pope Francis has said, “Palliative care is an expression of the truly human attitude of taking care of one another, especially of those who suffer. It is a testimony that the human person is always precious, even if marked by illness and old age.”

All testimony may be found on the WCC’s website at wisconsincatholic.org/advocacy.

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