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Wisconsin Catholic Conference: Testifies in support of pro-life legislation

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In a marathon session on May 7, Wisconsin Catholic Conference (WCC) staff testified in support of pro-life bills in four separate Assembly and Senate public hearings.

Senate Bill 175 (Sen. Roger Roth, R-Appleton) and Assembly Bill 179 (Rep. Jim Steineke, R-Kaukauna), the “Born Alive Protection Act,” establishes a standard of care for infants who survive an induced abortion, such that they receive the same care as any other child at that age. The proposal specifies that intentional neglect of an infant that causes death is murder, and mandates that health care providers or employees present at these births report when appropriate medical aid was not provided.

Governor Tony Evers has already indicated that he will veto this legislation if passed, contending that existing law already establishes a standard of care. The WCC addressed this in testimony. “Some have argued that this legislation is not necessary in Wisconsin. However, so long as there are those who advocate for abortion, who debase and devalue those who are vulnerable and who face challenges in life, there is a need to provide certainty that all born in Wisconsin have a right to life.”

Staff also urged the committees to consider improving the bills by requiring that parents be
informed of other options, such as utilizing perinatal hospice and adoption. Senate Bill 174 (Sen. Chris Kapenga, R-Delafield) and Assembly Bill 180 (Rep. Robin Vos, R-Rochester), the “A Woman’s Right to Know Act,” requires that a woman seeking an abortion via medication be informed that she may be able to continue her

pregnancy if she seeks immediate
medical assistance to counteract the effects of the first administration of the abortion drug.
The bill updates Wisconsin's informed consent laws in light of growing evidence that it may be possible for a woman to reverse the effect of the first drug, mifepristone, by getting an injection of progesterone. The proposal also requires improved abortion reporting to the state.

Senate Bill 173 (Sen. Patrick Testin, R-Stevens Point) and Assembly Bill 182 (Rep. Barbara
Dittrich, R-Oconomowoc) prohibit selective abortions, which are abortions that are sought solely because of the race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, or disability of the unborn child. The WCC asserted that "The law signals what is and is not acceptable behavior. Choosing to abort based on sex, race, or disability is simply wrong."

The testimony asked lawmakers to consider what truly furthers respect for women: "absolute freedom that would deny the right to life to a girl because she is not a boy, or an affirmation that her life is worthy of respect both inside and outside the womb."

Senate Bill 187 (Sen. Duey Stroebel, R-Saukville) and Assembly Bill 183 (Rep. Dittrich), and Assembly Bill 181 (Rep. Janel Brandtjen, R-Menomonee Falls), prohibit the state from
certifying a private abortion services provider or affiliate under the Medicaid program.
Staff stressed that "prioritizing funding for those state and public health entities that do not
perform abortions or are affiliated with such entities . . . ensure[s] that women's health care is devoted to prevention, diagnosis, and care, not termination of life."

Catholics are encouraged to contact their legislators in support of this legislation. To learn who your legislators are and how to contact them, visit http://legis.wisconsin.gov/ or call the State Legislative Hotline at 1-800-362-9472.