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Testimony in Support of HB 2292

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House Insurance Committee

February 16, 2011

3:30 PM

Chairman Schultz and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for holding this hearing and for your attention to this important issue.

The Kansas Catholic Conference strongly supports HB 2292. If one were to conduct a poll of all Kansans, we have little doubt that an overwhelming majority of them would share our support of this bill, for the simple reason that most Americans do not believe that they should have to pay for other people's abortions.

Currently, insurance companies in Kansas can cover abortions as a matter of course, meaning that everyday Kansans end up financing other people's abortions through their premium payments, usually completely unwittingly. It would be a very unpleasant surprise for many people in this state to discover what exactly it is their premium dollars are paying for.

Opponents of this legislation will likely point out that health insurance oftentimes pays for procedures and medications that many or most plan participants will never use. Some claim that allowing coverage of, say, Viagra, but not abortion, amounts to unfairness or even discrimination. In fact, this is a poor analogy that does not hold water.

Abortion should not be a routine component of insurance coverage for the simple reason that it is morally repugnant to a majority of our citizens. Individuals may hold differing views over whether insurance should cover Viagra, or LASIK surgery, or a number of treatments. Indeed, whether through one's health insurance premium or one's taxes, we all end up paying for services that we may never use or even that we find objectionable. That is just a function of being a part of modern society.

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However, abortion is a uniquely divisive issue. Opponents of abortion believe it to be a transcendent evil. Asking an opponent of abortion to finance it with their taxes, or with their health care premium, is an extremist position and well outside the mainstream of public opinion.

Put simply, abortion is not even remotely morally equivalent to Viagra, LASIK, or anything else on the menu of health care treatments. Abortion is not a preventative or corrective procedure, pregnancy is not an illness to be healed, and an unborn child is not a virus to be eradicated. Abortion is an act of destruction that is sharply distinct from what most Americans consider to be health care.

Because so many Americans receive their health insurance coverage through their employer, and because many employers offer only a single plan, many Kansans really have no choice but to accept that plan, no matter how unsatisfactory its terms. If their employer-offered plan includes abortion coverage that violates their conscience, people can find themselves in a very difficult position. This is a problem that has been fixed in other states in our region and should be fixed in Kansas.

Kansans should be able to provide health care for their children without having to support the destruction of the unborn children of others. This is not a radical concept. Indeed, Americans who cannot agree over abortion in general can and do find common ground in the proposition that those opposed to it should not be required to be complicit in it.

We urge the Committee to act on behalf of the conscience rights of everyday Kansans who simply want to have health care for themselves and their families without being involved in abortion. Please support HB 2292.