



Catholic Conference  
of Illinois

65 E. Wacker Place  
Suite 1620  
Chicago, IL 60601  
Ph. 312-368-1066  
Fx. 312-368-1090

108 E. Cook St.  
Springfield, IL 62704  
Ph. 217-528-9200  
Fx. 217-528-7214

[www.ilcatholic.org](http://www.ilcatholic.org)  
Diocese of Belleville  
Archdiocese of Chicago  
Diocese of Joliet  
Diocese of Peoria  
Diocese of Rockford  
Diocese of Springfield-in-IL

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## Illinois Bishops Warn Against Extreme Abortion Legislation in General Assembly

As Illinois faces so many pressing issues involving human life and dignity, it is incomprehensible that our elected officials have decided the pressing issue of the day is to enhance the chances that the lives of the most vulnerable and voiceless will be taken. Their efforts, similar to recent actions in New York and Virginia, focus on corrupting our God-given right to life and sowing unnecessary division.

**House Bill 2495 and Senate Bill 1942**, misnamed the Reproductive Health Act, include so many harmful provisions the full effect of these bills can hardly be imagined. We know the legislation:

- seeks to define abortion as health care and a fundamental right;
- removes abortion clinics from a regulatory framework designed for significant medical procedures;
- attacks a carefully constructed agreement in law on how hospitals care for the victims of sexual assault;
- repeals the ban on partial birth abortion;
- repeals legal protections for doctors and hospitals who decline to participate in abortions;
- requires private health insurance in Illinois to fully cover the cost of abortion;
- removes the requirement that only doctors can perform abortions;
- as well as many other changes that in totality require us to treat abortion as a celebrated right instead of a heart-wrenching tragedy.

Abortion is not health care. It is the intentional taking of innocent and defenseless human life. Moreover, provisions in the law that allow healthcare providers to live and work in accordance with their sincerely-held moral beliefs are not wrong. Freedom of religion and conscience protections are fundamental rights, enshrined in our state and federal constitutions, and they must be respected.

**House Bill 2467 and Senate Bill 1594** seek to repeal the Parental Notice of Abortion Act. This law, which has been in statute since 1995 and enforced since 2013, ensures parents are involved in profound medical decisions involving their children. Every other state bordering Illinois – Wisconsin, Indiana, Kentucky, Missouri and Iowa – requires at least parental notification. It is a broadly-supported, reasonable safeguard that allows parents to properly exercise love and care for their children. Our government should support families, not undermine them.

Opposition to these bills do not require one to assume a pro-life political position. Opposition should be the natural result of applying reason, fairness and a basic respect for human dignity to the examination of their contents. We cannot further devalue human life to the extent proposed in this legislation without dire consequences for ourselves.

We hope to lead all people of goodwill to rise up and be heard in opposition to these terrible efforts. Accordingly, in the days ahead, we will be distributing more information and calls to action. Today, we ask for your prayers and support as you certainly have ours.

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