



THE DIOCESE OF BELLEVILLE

February 2, 2017
The Presentation of the Lord

Dear People of God:

Peace be with you!

I am writing to call to your attention a bill that is pending before the Illinois legislature. If this bill is passed, it would use your tax dollars to pay for abortions, which bring an end to developing human life in the womb. The bill is HB 40. The Bishops of the Province of Chicago have been informed that it may pass, if those who oppose it do not make their voices heard loud and clear.

Since the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court decision of *Roe vs. Wade*, there have been more than 57 million abortions in the United States. We are working hard to build a culture of life by advocating for laws that make it easier to bring a child into this world and to care for children and mothers facing difficult situations. Happily, the national abortion rate is at its lowest since the *Roe v. Wade* ruling. Unfortunately, the enactment of House Bill 40 would set back those efforts by coercing all who pay taxes to support indirectly the ending of developing innocent human life. Abortion is an elective procedure and we Bishops believe that state tax dollars to pay for this procedure is immoral and unjust. It would be better to use tax money to fund assistance and counseling for women facing challenges in their pregnancies, prenatal services for poor families, child care for working mothers, and the expanding of health care opportunities for women with special needs.

House Bill 40 not only mandates state support of abortion, but also would include abortion coverage in state employees' health care plans and the Medicaid program. Additionally, the bill allows taxpayer money to fund grants to organizations that refer, counsel for, and perform abortions.

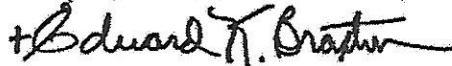
The Catholic Conference of Illinois, which serves as the public policy arm of the Catholic Bishops of Illinois, has long joined with Catholic Charities and Catholic health care organizations to advocate that essential services be funded. However, as we have seen over the past few years and in the current budget stalemate, our efforts have largely been ignored by state lawmakers and officials. We must ask how our elected representatives are able to turn their backs on paying for programs that help the disabled, the elderly, children in need and students and yet they are willing to fund publicly the reprehensible practice of abortion. Please call or write your state representative and urge him or her to vote against House Bill 40.

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If you need assistance in determining the name of your lawmaker, or in sending a message to him or her, go to www.ilcatholic.org or call the Catholic Conference at its Chicago office at 312-368-1066 or its Springfield office at 217-528-9200.

Please join me praying for women in crisis situations that lead them to think they must end their pregnancies. Join me in praying for those who find ways to assist them. And join me in praying for the conversion of the hearts of legislators who would use public funds for extinguishing the light of innocent life.

Prayerfully yours in Christ,

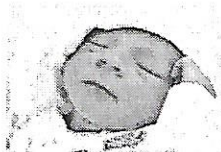


The Most Reverend Edward K. Braxton
Bishop of Belleville



Catholic Conference
of Illinois

HB 40: State Funding of Abortion!



The new Illinois legislature has introduced
House Bill 40, which does the following:

- Authorizes state taxpayer money to be used to pay for elective abortions for recipients in the state Medicaid program – this is currently prohibited.
- Authorizes state workers' health insurance to be used to pay for elective abortions – this is currently prohibited.
- Authorizes taxpayer money to fund grants to organizations that refer, counsel for and perform abortions – this is currently prohibited.

Call your state representative to urge him/her to vote "No" on HB 40!

To find your state representative, go to www.ilcatholic.org,
or call the Catholic Conference of Illinois at 312-368-1066 or 217-528-9200.