



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

**Statement on Opposition to HB 581  
Health Care Access and Availability  
May 15, 2024**

The Catholic Conference is opposed to HB 581 because it appears to set up a conflict between the Illinois Health Care Right of Conscience Act and the language in the bill defining a “Hospital emergency service to include an abortion.” Further clarification is needed to ensure there is no conflict in the section that states (c) “The amendments to this Section are declarative of existing law. Nothing in this Section shall be construed to alter existing legal statutes and rights.” It would be clearer if this bill specifically referenced the Health Care Right of Conscience Act. It is our hope that that it is still the public policy of this state to respect and protect the right of conscience of all persons who refuse to engage in the delivery of medical care whether acting individually or in association with other persons due to their conscience.

Regardless of whether a woman experiences an ectopic pregnancy, a miscarriage, or another complication related to pregnancy, Catholic physicians and hospitals will continue to do what they have always done: respect the dignity of both mother and child. They will evaluate and treat both the mother and child as the clinical situation requires while upholding the highest medical and ethical standards. Those who respect life at all stages will continue to provide exemplary care for all those they encounter.

We are concerned that HB 581 requires a physician to provide an abortion if the abortion could be the stabilizing treatment is to resolve an emergency medical condition. This is unnecessary because since the 1980s, federal law - Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act (EMTALA) has guided the policies that health care personnel are to follow in an emergency in which a pregnant woman or her unborn child is in distress. The condition of both mother and child are to be stabilized. In addition, for decades the Illinois Health Care Right of Conscience and EMTALA have existed side by side. We disagree with the interpretation in HB 581 that the deliberate killing of the unborn child is a stabilizing treatment when other medical options are available.

HB 581 raises concerns, particularly its inference that direct abortion is the medically indicated intervention in cases of pregnancy complication. Physicians and hospitals opposed to abortion provide high quality care to mothers and babies before and after the Roe decision in 1973 and in the post-Roe world their practices and high standards will not change. They will continue to focus on two lives: mother and child. We are concerned that HB 581 misleadingly seeks to equate management of both ectopic pregnancy and miscarriage with abortion.

If you have any questions, please email me at [gilligan@ilcatholic.org](mailto:gilligan@ilcatholic.org) or call at 312.315.4621.