



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

## Catholic Conference of Illinois Opposes House Bill 4867 – “Reproductive Health Decisions”

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House Bill 4867 adds “reproductive health decisions” to the Illinois Human Rights Act.

- This addition would make employers, public accommodations, and other entities under the Act subject to potential civil rights violations relating to these reproductive health decisions.
- This means discrimination claims could be made relating to a wide range of reproductive health decisions, from abortion to *in vitro fertilization* (“IVF”), including hostile work environment claims arising from employers’ statements and actions expressing opposition to such measures within the workplace.

These are moral issues involving matters of conscience that can go to the very core of Catholic moral and religious teaching.

- We oppose HB 4867 because by affecting all employers, the bill makes churches, synagogues, mosques, and temples subject to civil rights violations for their expression of moral opposition to these issues within their own workplaces.
- The State should not control the actions or statements of religious groups within their own organizations regarding matters of deeply held religious beliefs, such as the reproductive health decisions covered in the bill.

The bill also lacks clarity and raises questions as to whether, and to what extent, an employer’s speech or conduct would violate the law.

- It is not clear what a religious employer or employee association could discuss with employees regarding reproductive health decisions.
- The right to expressive association, which is protected by the First Amendment, allows religious employers and employee associations to determine that its message will be effectively conveyed only by employees who sincerely share their views. HB 4867 could prohibit such organizations from speaking to prospective employees as well as current employees about their personal views and conduct relating to reproductive health decisions.
- The bill also could force a religious organization or an employee association to accept employees who would not faithfully and accurately convey its mission, which will impair the ability of the organization to conduct the work for which it was established and to control its own identity.