

FLORIDA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

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MICHAEL B. SHEEDY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



March 16, 2021

The Honorable Erin Grall
317 The Capitol
402 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

RE: Support for Parental Bill of Rights (HB 241)

Dear Representative Grall:

Thank you for filing HB 241. This important bill protects the fundamental rights of parents to direct the upbringing and education of their children. It centralizes key policies and ensures parents are better-informed of existing rights and provides clarity in situations involving children's health.

Protecting the Institution of the Family and Fundamental Rights of Parents

Parents have a fundamental right to direct the upbringing, education and care of their minor children. The family unit is the foundation of culture and parents are the primary educators of their children. Except in the most compelling of circumstances, parental rights supersede the interests of governmental officials or institutions as it relates to caregiving of minor children. This bill promotes the important principle of subsidiarity by placing proper educational and medical decision-making authority with the family, rather than the government.

Parents' Right to Oversee the Government's Care of their Minor Children

Parents have the right to important information regarding their children when those children interact with public entities. Information regarding the health, education and well-being of children should not be withheld from parents, whether inadvertent or intentional. This bill protects parental rights by expressly prohibiting government actions that infringe on parental rights. If any governmental entity infringes on parental rights, it must overcome the "compelling interest" test to demonstrate that its action was necessary. This is the highest standard of judicial review.

Parents' Right Transparency from Institutions

Parents of public school children have the right to review instructional materials and curriculum that government-run schools employ to children. These institutions have an obligation to be transparent and forthcoming regarding both course content and any supplemental educational activities. Having access to this information allows parents to make informed decisions about their child's education and to affect change where needed.

Establishing Parental Consent Requirements for Health Care Services

Parents also have a right to be informed about medical care provided to their minor child and to direct the care provided to the child. This bill establishes parental consent requirements for medical care provided to, and medical drug prescriptions written for, a minor child. These consent requirements respect parental authority and properly place the government, and the medical industry, in service to the family, rather than vice versa.

We appreciate your work in filing this good bill, and encourage support for it.

Sincerely,



Ken Kniepmann
Associate for Health

cc: Most Rev. Enrique Delgado, Auxiliary Bishop of Miami and FCCB Health Moderator
Most Rev. Gerald M. Barbarito, Bishop of Palm Beach and FCCB Education

Moderator

Michael B. Sheedy
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