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March 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We, the diocesan bishops of Illinois, write today out of great concern. Bills have been introduced before the Illinois General Assembly to repeal Illinois' Parental Notice of Abortion Act. They are **House Bill 1797** and **Senate Bill 2190**. The enactment of this legislation would lead to tragic and irreversible outcomes.

The Parental Notice of Abortion Act simply requires that when a minor girl seeks to have an abortion, a parent or guardian is notified 48 hours before the procedure. The obvious hope of the law is that parents, by their deep love and moral obligation, will act to protect, support and guide their children. In every other facet of life, we are taught – and we teach – that parental involvement is key to the child's best interest. Repealing the Act is nothing less than an invasion into the sacred space of family life by the state, with no provision to support the minor emotionally, humanely or materially at a critical moment in her life.

It is unfortunately true that not all young people come from loving homes. In these cases, when the threat of abuse or neglect outweighs the rights of parents, the current law allows a young girl the opportunity to declare in writing that there is abuse, or she can seek an emergency hearing before a judge to explain her situation. We acknowledge that this can be emotionally difficult; however, such difficulty must be weighed against the harm done when our laws effectively undermine family life by separating children from the care of parents who love them the most. The state should do everything to support families, not destabilize them.

The existing Parental Notice of Abortion Act provides important safeguards against the evils of sexual abuse and human trafficking. If a minor girl can be taken by any adult man to an abortion clinic, in the hopes of erasing the evidence of his abuse, what protection exists outside of the girl's parent or guardian being informed? Why would we want to create such a dangerous environment?

Simply put, the Parental Notice of Abortion Act works. According to statistics gathered by the Illinois Department of Public Health, since the law's final enactment by the Illinois Supreme Court in 2013, abortions performed on minors in Illinois have decreased over 30 percent. The lives saved by this law are real and present among us.

These are the reasons every state in the Midwest and 37 states overall have laws requiring some form of parental involvement in the decision of a minor to have an abortion. Illinois has been among those states for 8 years and no obvious problems or detriments have been publicly exposed. The repeal of Parental Notice of Abortion is a tragic solution in search of a problem.

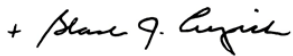
So what can you do? As Catholics of good will, we call on you to engage your elected officials – state representatives, state senators and the Governor – and urge them to oppose **House Bill 1797** and **Senate Bill 2190**.

Possible methods of contact include phone calls, letters, emails, and Zoom meetings between legislators and you, their concerned constituents. For all of these efforts, you will need to be able to identify your legislators and secure the appropriate contact information. Here is how:

Visit the Catholic Conference of Illinois' website – www.ilcatholic.org – scroll nearly to the bottom of the homepage, click on “Find Your Legislator” and input the asked-for information. Doing this will identify one’s state elected officials, and simply clicking on their names will provide the contact information.

In our concern for all human life, and particularly for the struggles of young girls in these difficult circumstances and their unborn children, we ask you to participate in this effort. Together we are strong, and we can make a difference. Thank you.

Sincerely,




His Eminence Cardinal Blase J. Cupich
Archbishop of Chicago



Most Reverend David J. Malloy
Bishop of Rockford



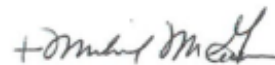
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