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Roman Catholic Bishops of Massachusetts

Statement Regarding Senate Budget Amendment Expanding Abortion Access

November 16, 2020

The Catholic Church teaches that life itself starts at conception and ends with natural death.

Last week, as part of the annual fiscal year state budget process, the Massachusetts House of Representatives passed amendment number 759.1. That amendment, if enacted, would expand abortion access in the Commonwealth well beyond what is currently enshrined in state law.

Tomorrow, the budget debate will move from the House to the Massachusetts Senate. Regrettably, the Senate amendment (No. 180) closely mirrors the version that was passed in the House last week. In fact, it would also allow abortions to be performed under certain circumstances for the full term of the pregnancy. That fact alone is in direct conflict with Catholic teaching and must be opposed.

Today, we feel compelled to restate additional objections that were raised in our initial Statement. Specifically, current law requires a young woman under the age of 18 years old to gain the consent of a parent, guardian or the court to have an abortion. The amendment under consideration would decrease the age of consent to 16 years old. In its simplest terms, a 16 or 17 year old girl would be deprived of the guidance and support of an adult at the time of making this life changing decision.

Finally, although life-supporting equipment would be required to be in the room for abortions performed after 24 weeks, the specific language in the amendment is nuanced enough that the physician would not be required to use the equipment. Specifically, it would “enable” the physician performing the abortion to take appropriate steps, in keeping with good medical practice...to preserve the life and health of a live birth and the patient.

For these reasons we urge the full Senate not to pass amendment number 180.

His Eminence Seán P. O'Malley, OFM, Cap.
Archbishop of Boston

Most Reverend Robert J. McManus
Bishop of Worcester

Most Reverend Edgar M. da Cunha, SDV
Bishop of Fall River