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Illinois' Catholic Bishops Offer Statement on Push for Consideration of "Reproductive Health Act"

During the past week, we have watched supporters of the misnamed "Reproductive Health Act" propel the legislation into the end-of-session rush. The introduced version of the bill dramatically rewrites current abortion law, going further than *Roe v. Wade* in stripping human rights and dignity from the unborn child with this single statement: "A fertilized egg, embryo, or fetus does not have independent rights under the laws of this State." The fundamental premise of the bill is flawed, and no amendment or tweak to the language will change the fact that it is designed to rob the vulnerable life in the womb of any trace of human dignity and value.

On Memorial Day, there will be five days left in the legislative session set to end on May 31. Major issues that will require bi-partisan cooperation and unity among law makers remain, such as passing a balanced budget for the health, education and safety of Illinois residents and crafting a statewide construction plan with unresolved funding. Conversations on these matters need to take place in an atmosphere of comity and civility and any talk of abortion will only sow more divisiveness and disharmony in today's polarized political climate.

We ask that lawmakers set aside consideration of the "Reproductive Health Act," especially since no final form of the bill has been published, vetted through hearings or fully discussed.

Proponents of the bill cite as a need for action the the potential uncertainty surrounding *Roe v. Wade*. Yet, if the landmark case were overturned today, abortion unfortunately would still be legal in Illinois. House Bill 40 not only authorized taxpayer-funding of abortion, but also removed so-called "trigger language" that would have reverted the state to its pre-Roe policy of allowing an abortion only to save the mother's life.

We urge all legislators to consider the common good of the state in these final days of the session and refrain from interjecting chaos into their deliberations by considering the morally- and emotionally-divisive and politically-charged "Reproductive Health Act."

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