



CONNECTICUT CATHOLIC PUBLIC AFFAIRS CONFERENCE, INC.
134 FARMINGTON AVENUE
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06105-3784

MICHAEL C. CULHANE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DEACON DAVID W. REYNOLDS
LEGISLATIVE LIAISON

Committee on Insurance and Real Estate
Public Hearing
3/1/2016

Testimony On
Raised House Bill 5230
An Act Requiring Health Insurance Coverage for Fertility Preservation
for Insureds Diagnosed with Cancer

The Connecticut Catholic Public Affairs Conference, upon reviewing HB 5230, *An Act Requiring Health Insurance Coverage for Fertility Preservation for Insureds Diagnosed with Cancer*, is concerned about the lack of an exception for *religious employers* within this proposed legislation. The Conference understands the logic behind this legislation, as well as the challenges individuals face who are undergoing treatment for cancer. The Conference, however, believes that this committee should amend this raised bill by including an exemption for *religious employers* for two primary reasons.

First, the medical procedures used in fertility preservation - and those used to bring about a future pregnancy using the products of fertility preservation - conflict with Catholic teachings on procreation and the sacred value of all human life at every stage of development. This bill not only references the freezing of human eggs and sperm, but also the freezing of human embryos, which is a clear violation of Catholic teachings. The Conference does not wish to engage in a deep debate on its moral teachings, and it only asks that this committee recognize the existence of these teachings. The Conference is not attempting to oppose the enactment of this legislation, but it is seeking the protection of Catholic institutions from being forced to pay for coverage for their employees that directly conflict with church teaching.

Second, the Connecticut General Assembly has a long history of recognizing potential conflicts between the state insurance mandates and the beliefs of *religious employers*. Current state statutes relating to mandatory coverage for infertility treatments in sections 38a-509 (individual health plans) and 38a-536 (group health plans) of the General Statutes provide an exemption for *religious employers*. This same exemption can

be found in sections 38a-503e (individual health plans) and 38a-530e (group health plans) of the General Statutes, which require mandatory birth control coverage.

The language used in the aforementioned statutory sections relate to infertility treatment and birth control that has worked well over the past years in protecting the right of *religious employers*, while at the same time, allowing the State to mandate insurance coverage that it felt was critical to the citizens of Connecticut.

The Conference hopes that the committee will apply this same exemption in HB 5230, and protect the balance between religious beliefs and state insurance mandates that have existed successfully in our state for many years.



Michael C. Culhane
Executive Director