



## THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC BIOETHICS CENTER

600 REED ROAD, SUITE 102, BROOMALL, PA 19008 (215) 877-2660 (215) 877-2688 FAX NCBCENTER.ORG

### Bioethics Public Policy Report March 12, 2024

#### State by State

- A bill was recently proposed in Connecticut that would allow human composting instead of burial or cremation. The Catholic bishops of Connecticut have voiced their opposition to the bill as insufficiently respectful of the human body, since, by this process, there is “nothing [distinguishable] of the body to be placed in a casket or an urn and laid to rest in a sacred place where Christian faithful can visit for prayer and remembrance.” For further information, click [here](#).
- In South Dakota, Rep. Taylor Rehfeldt is seeking to require the government to create a video explaining that treatment for ectopic pregnancies are not illegal under the State’s pro-life laws. The proposed bill comes at a time where doctors seem to be uncertain as to whether the law allows them to treat such cases and how they are to treat them. For further information, click [here](#).
- Following the Alabama supreme court decision finding that frozen embryos are persons within the meaning of Alabama state law, Alabama republicans have passed a bill that “shield[s] providers from prosecution and civil lawsuits ‘for providing goods or services related to [IVF] except for an act or omission that is both intentional and not arising from or related to IVF services.’” The bill does not undo what the supreme court ruled, but it allows IVF clinics to continue to operate notwithstanding the jurisprudential development. For further information, click [here](#) or [here](#).
- Missouri Attorney General Andrew Bailey announced a lawsuit against Planned Parenthood for trafficking minors across state lines without parental consent so that the minors may obtain abortions, in violation of the State’s laws. He said in a press release, “This is the beginning of the end for Planned Parenthood in the State of Missouri.” For further information, click [here](#).
- Legislative bodies in West Virginia, Iowa, and Kentucky passed bills that would require a video created by Live Action showing fetal development in schools. To watch the video, click [here](#). For further information, click [here](#).
- In Minnesota, the House of Representative’s Public Safety and Finance Policy Committee held a hearing on March 7 for the End-of-Life Option Act, HF 1930, with another hearing scheduled for March 12 by the Judiciary Finance and Civil Law Committee. The Minnesota Catholic Conference (MCC) and several bishops have encouraged Catholics to oppose the bill, since it opens the door to physician-assisted suicide. To see the status of the house bill, click [here](#). For further information, click [here](#).

- The Illinois legislature is considering a bill that would label failure to obtain “gender-affirming care” as child abuse. The bill treats minors as adults for the purposes of consent. For further information, click [here](#).

### **Federal Courts**

- Students for Life filed an amicus brief in the upcoming case before the Supreme Court on chemical abortion, citing environmental concerns. With the methods used currently, they warned that women having at-home chemical abortions meant that the remains of the children were getting flushed away into the sewage system alongside the chemical residue from the pills themselves. For further information, click [here](#).
- Idaho Republican Sen. Jim Risch and Rep. Russ Fulcher filed a bicameral amicus brief in support of their State’s pro-life law as the Biden administration seeks to invalidate the law under the Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act (EMTALA), which the administration says requires hospitals to perform abortions. For further information, click [here](#).
- Christian pregnancy resource center First Choice has filed a petition to the Supreme Court asking for the federal district court to hear its case against the New Jersey Attorney General, Matthew Platkin, alleging selective targeting based on its pro-life values. The petition comes after the court dismissed their initial case for lack of jurisdiction, despite the fact that a constitutional question is directly implicated by the case. For further information, click [here](#).

### **National**

- Sen. Cindy Hyde-Smith, R-MS, blocked a bill by Sen. Tammy Duckworth, D-IL, that would have created a “right to access in-vitro fertilization (IVF)” and surrogacy. She cited that the bill as it was written “explicitly waives the Religious Freedom Restoration Act” and would have made numerous pro-life organizations subject to civil liability. Duckworth had sought to pass the bill by unanimous consent, but Sen. Hyde-Smith’s speech opposed to it blocked the bill. For further information, click [here](#).

### **Conscience/Religious Liberty**

- A new bill proposed to fight “antisemitism and hate speech” in the Canadian Parliament could strip away the ability of Christians to speak freely about the faith. The bill would strip away exceptions to the country’s antisemitism and hate speech laws that allowed persons to speak freely if making an argument or expressing an opinion in good faith based on their religion. Without this exception, any speech that “promotes hatred” against a protected class is a criminal offense. For further information, click [here](#).

### **International**

- In Ireland, two amendments to the constitution have been proposed, titled the “Family Amendment” and the “Care Amendment.” The Family Amendment would

change the constitution's affirmation of "the Family as the natural primary and fundamental unit group of Society," built on marriage, to including "the Family, whether founded on marriage or on other durable relationships," thus striking marriage as the foundation of the family. The Care Amendment strikes all notions of motherhood as central to the home and uses gender-neutral language, instead. Irish bishops have decried the proposed amendments as diminishing the importance of families, marriage, and motherhood. For further information, click [here](#).

### **Of Note**

- Pope Francis called gender ideology "the ugliest danger" that would "eras[e] humanity" in a recent papal audience. The comments were made at the Congress on Vocations at the Vatican. For further information, click [here](#) or [here](#).
- A recent study showed no correlation between gender-affirming care and reduced suicide rates among youths. To read the study, click [here](#). For further information, click [here](#).
- 151 Catholics signed a letter stating their concern for the erosion of standards for determining brain death, citing that the new standards set forth by the American Association of Neurology (AAN) could lead to incorrect pronouncements of death, which would lead to organ harvesting for donations while the donors are still alive. For further information, click [here](#).

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The National Catholic Bioethics Center webpage, available at <http://www.ncbcenter.org/>, is a significant resource for bioethics information. NCBC bioethicists are also on-call for consultation twenty-four hours a day, seven days per week, at 215-877-2660.