



**Proponent Testimony HB 475
House Government Oversight Committee
Catholic Conference of Ohio
November 12th, 2024**

Chair Peterson, Vice Chair Thomas, Ranking Member Humphrey, and members of the Government Oversight Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony. My name is Will Kuehnle, and I am an associate director with the Catholic Conference of Ohio. The Catholic Conference is the official voice of the Catholic Church in Ohio on matters of public policy, and we are pleased to support House Bill 475 to confirm that public spending must recognize the dignity of human life.

The Catholic Church stands in solidarity with each woman navigating an unexpected or difficult pregnancy. Our faith calls us to build a civilization of love in which each woman's pregnancy is supported by her community, including local and state governments. HB 475 ensures that state dollars do not replace local dollars when municipal or county governments abandon their obligation to seek the flourishing of mothers and children by instead funding elective abortions.

The overwhelming majority of women who seek elective abortions cite lack of support in raising their child as the reason for terminating pregnancy. Fear of interrupted education, concern that the practical costs of raising a child are insurmountable, and abandonment by husbands or partners are the reasons women report for seeking elective abortions. These are needs which our communities are called to meet, and the Catholic Church strives to model a response which accompanies and uplifts women through such challenges.

Public funds should be allocated to programs and services that support women in crisis rather than ending a life. In no circumstance should state dollars, even by subsidy, bring about the termination of a human life. HB 475 will encourage Ohio communities, at every level of government, to invest in a culture that empowers and supports women without compromising the dignity of the unborn.

The Catholic Conference of Ohio strongly urges the passage of HB 475, a bill that reflects Ohio's commitment to the dignity of human life and to the well-being of families. Thank you for this opportunity to testify, and I am happy to answer any questions.