



Proponent Testimony HB 410
House Medicaid Committee
Catholic Conference of Ohio
October 7, 2025

Chair Gross, Vice Chair Barhorst, Ranking Member Baker, and members of the House Medicaid Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer proponent testimony on House Bill 410. My name is Marsha Forson, and I am an Associate Director with the Catholic Conference of Ohio. The Conference is the official voice of the Catholic Church in Ohio on matters of public policy.

The Church affirms the fundamental dignity and equality of women. In the words of the late Pope St. John Paul II, “as far as personal rights are concerned, there is an urgent need to achieve real equality in every area: equal pay for equal work, protection for working mothers, fairness in career advancements, equality of spouses with regard to family rights and the recognition of everything that is part of the rights and duties of citizens in a democratic State.” The intrinsic dignity, value, and worth of every woman is the basis for her every right. The same dignity that is inherent to women is also universally possessed by every human person, even in life’s most nascent and vulnerable stages.

The issue of abortion is among the most, if not the most, contentious subjects of our times. Opinions on the topic correspond to the very core of the person and our most deeply held values. For some, it is a matter of freedom and autonomy, for others it is the deprivation of innocent human life and a grave violation of human dignity. While the majority of Ohioans voted in a measure which amended the Constitution to allow abortion, it is also essential to consider the consciences of the 1.6 million Ohioans who did not. For these voters and taxpayers, the issue is not one of a mere policy difference, political dispute, or disagreement on a budget line item, but a substantial and jarring division on what it means to be human and what constitutes human life itself. To many, each person from his or her beginning in a mother’s womb to the moment of natural death has an innate dignity which the state neither gives nor takes away but is called to recognize.

HB 410 protects the consciences of your constituents for whom participation in abortion through the use of their tax dollars to fund even the indirect costs of abortion providers, is a source of severe distress.

Further, to borrow again from the words of Pope John Paul II “a radical solidarity with women requires that the underlying causes which make a child unwanted be addressed. There will never be justice, including equality, development and peace ... unless there is an unflinching determination to *respect, protect, love and serve life* – every human life, at every stage and in every situation.” We urge legislators on both sides of the aisle to work together to ensure that every Ohioan has access to the healthcare services they need without joining the provision of those services to practices to which many are morally opposed in the depths of their conscience.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.