



Proponent Testimony HB 524
House Technology and Innovation Committee
Catholic Conference of Ohio
February 3, 2026

Chair Claggett, Vice-Chair Workman, Ranking Member Mohamed, and members of the House Technology and Innovation Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer proponent testimony on House Bill 524. 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. We would like to thank Representatives Cockley and Mathews for introducing this bipartisan legislation.

We are grateful to the Committee for taking on the challenging task of discerning the benefits and risks of developing artificial intelligence. This discernment requires consideration of its potential impact on the well-being of Ohioans. Unfortunately, numerous news stories have recounted instances in which vulnerable individuals, particularly children, teenagers, and those with mental health conditions, have been instructed by AI models to harm themselves or others. In these times, it is necessary to ensure that such tools are developed responsibly so that technology might fulfill its intended aim, contributing to the flourishing of people and communities, and not to life's destruction.

Compelled by our belief in the inviolable God-given dignity of each person and the sanctity of every human life, we are pleased to support this bill, which holds responsible persons and companies for the development of artificial intelligence models or applications that encourage users to engage in any form of self-harm or harm another person. The State of Ohio has a responsibility to ensure that the rapid development of these technologies serves the human person and does not encourage intrinsic harm to a user or violate the dignity of another. This demonstrates a conscious effort to protect Ohioans who might be susceptible to the influence of AI-generated instructions.

Recently, Pope Leo XIV, in an address to the 2025 Builders AI Forum, exhorted developers “of AI to cultivate moral discernment as a fundamental part of their work — to develop systems that reflect justice, solidarity, and a genuine reverence for life.” We echo his call and encourage the Committee to pass this bill in the service of protecting human life and holding accountable those who neglect their great responsibility with this technology.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.