



Diocese of Rockford

555 Colman Center Drive
P.O. Box 7044
Rockford, Illinois 61125

(815) 399-4300
Fax (815) 399-4769

Office of the Bishop

February 28, 2019

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I write to you at a moment of profound challenge to the citizens of the State of Illinois. In recent weeks Democrats in the Illinois House and Senate, following the examples of other states, have introduced bills that, if passed and signed, would expand attacks on the life of the unborn through abortion while, at the same time, attacking the rights of conscience and the rights of parents of a minor child or of an adult mentally or developmentally disabled child seeking an abortion.

House Bill 1942 and Senate Bill 2495, identical pieces of legislation, seek to strip the unborn of any protections at any stage of development. These bills declare abortion to be a “fundamental right” and an element of the provision of health care. As a result, the bills repeal the most fundamental acts of humanity and compassion for the child in the womb.

Among other provisions, the bill repeals the current ban on the gruesome practice of partial birth abortions carried out on late term preborn children. The legislation also mandates that all health insurance plans include abortion services provided at no cost and without restrictions. Also, the new bills repeal the Abortion Performance Refusal Act, which protects doctors, nurses and hospitals who refuse to permit, recommend, perform or assist in abortion. In so doing, any rights of conscience, especially religious objections, are trampled upon and disregarded. Thus the most fundamental core of each person is, in law, to be forced to cede to and participate in the taking of innocent human life in the womb.

At the same time, two other identical pieces of legislation, House Bill 2467 and Senate Bill 1594, repeal the Illinois Parental Notice of Abortion Act. That Act, upheld unanimously by the Illinois Supreme Courts just six years ago, has the common sense purpose of ensuring that parents would be part of the life altering decision of their minor child, or their adult mentally or developmentally disabled child, in the case that she seeks an abortion.

Taken together, these bills represent a monumental change and deliberate expansion of the provision of abortion in our beloved state. Of course we know that this is not a partisan question. The move toward expansion of the provision of abortion services took place also in 2017 when Republican Governor Bruce Rauner signed a bill allowing the use of our tax dollars to pay for abortions in our state. In both cases, the underlying issue is the very meaning of human life at its earliest stages and throughout its development until just prior to birth.

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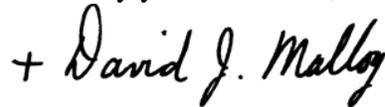
By means of these bills, the overwhelming scientific evidence of the membership of the fetus in the human family is disregarded. So too are the rights of conscience that are fundamental to our democracy and the salvation of our souls.

For too long our society has allowed for a *de facto* coexistence between our societal foundation recognizing the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and the destruction of a defenseless category among us who are too young to speak on their own behalf. These bills now propose to expand the logic of power and death that so divides us as a nation.

As people of faith, we must take a stand against this tragic and mistaken action. Please begin with prayer for the defense of the unborn, but then include your involvement in the political process. Even if you have not done so before, please consider contacting your Representative and Senator to urge defeat of these bills. To find contact information for your legislators please consult the Catholic Conference of Illinois website, www.ilcatholic.org, or call the Life Office of the Diocese of Rockford at 815-399-4300 for further information.

Entrusting our efforts for all life, from the moment of conception until natural death, to the care of our Blessed Mother, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

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Most Reverend David J. Malloy
Bishop of Rockford