



WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

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WCC Backs Right To View Ultrasound Of Unborn Child

On June 5, the Wisconsin Catholic Conference (WCC) testified in support of companion bills to provide a pregnant woman the opportunity to see her unborn child through an ultrasound.

Senate Bill 206 (Sen. Mary Lazich, R-New Berlin) and Assembly Bill 227 (Rep. Pat Strachota, R-West Bend) are also known as Sonya's Law, in reference to the young mother from Milwaukee who testified that she recently chose to continue her unintended pregnancy after seeing her baby and hearing his heartbeat during a free ultrasound consultation.

The bills require that, except in case of rape, incest, or medical emergency, any physician who performs or induces an abortion must arrange for the woman to have an ultrasound. The woman can choose the type of ultrasound and the physician must provide a simultaneous oral explanation of what is displayed on the ultrasound, while also allowing her to see the ultrasound if she chooses. While abortion providers would face civil penalties for violating this law, no penalty could be assessed against the woman. In order to ensure that a woman receives prompt and effective treatment in case of an emergency, the bills also require that a physician performing an abortion have admitting privileges at a hospital within 30 miles of the location where the abortion takes place.

WCC Associate Director Barbara Sella described the bills as a “natural extension of our state’s informed consent law” and as incorporating basic safety standards. “It should be standard care that women who go to an abortion clinic see their medical records and receive medically accurate information so that they can make a fully informed decision.”

Referring to cases in which women seeking abortions were told that their unborn child was just a “clump of cells,” Sella argued that women must be given the opportunity to see and hear medically accurate information. “In a decision of this magnitude, it is essential that a woman rely on her own mental and sensory perception, without outside bias or interference.”

Sella reminded both committees that while the two bills help women determine their future, society needs to do more to assist them in choosing life for their children.

“We need to make certain that women are fully informed about all the resources that exist in the community, so that they can see that choosing life for their baby does not mean abandoning all hope for an education, for meaningful employment, and for a better life.”

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