

Testimony in Support of LB 1110

TO: SENATOR TIM GAY & MEMBERS
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

FROM: James R. Cunningham
Executive Director

DATE: February 25, 2010

The Nebraska Catholic Conference, representing the mutual interests and concerns of the Archdiocese of Omaha and the dioceses of Lincoln and Grand Island, under the direction of the Diocesan Bishops, **supports LB 1110** and urges its advancement and enactment.

It is the firmly held view of the Nebraska Catholic Conference that continuing to provide prenatal services to unborn children, regardless of their mothers' immigration status is an important and urgent Pro-Life matter. Denying prenatal care coverage in these circumstances of family poverty is an affront to human dignity and a terrible injustice, which could do great harm to the lives of children at a very vulnerable stage in their development. What's worse, the lack of access to coverage for such care could be a decisive factor in leading some pregnant women to choose abortion over childbirth.

We understand that some are concerned about an impact from illegal immigration affecting Nebraska if the state continues providing prenatal care and services to the unborn children of undocumented mothers. It must be emphasized that the true and ultimate recipient of this coverage is not the mother, but her unborn child, who is not an illegal immigrant and who will soon be a U.S. citizen upon his/her birth. The immigration status of the mother should not adversely affect the health and well being of the unborn child. Assisting the unborn child, a presumptive citizen, to have a healthier start to life makes sense not only from an economic standpoint, since this child's healthcare needs are likely to be greater without the benefits of prenatal care and services, but from a human rights standpoint as well.

As you weigh the issues at stake with LB 1110—caring for vulnerable human beings versus concerns about illegal immigration—please consider the need for a proper balancing of these issues. As a society, we have already determined that caring for human beings who need medical attention is the right thing to do. It is founded upon the fundamental principle of respect for human dignity. Providing prenatal care and services to unborn children, regardless of the mother's immigration status adheres to this fundamental principle and therefore represents a proper balancing.

We urge you to advance LB 1110 to General File.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.