



Human Life
Is
Sacred

BISHOPS' PASTORAL PLAN FOR PRO LIFE ACTIVITIES

STATE COORDINATING COMMITTEE:
ARCHDIOCESE OF OMAHA
DIOCESE OF LINCOLN
DIOCESE OF GRAND ISLAND
NEBRASKA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

ACTION ALERT

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URGE LEGISLATURE TO PRESERVE PRENATAL SERVICES FOR UNBORN CHILDREN

BACKGROUND

The federal Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) provides healthcare coverage to children in low-income families that do not qualify for Medicaid. CHIP includes unborn children as eligible recipients of healthcare assistance (i.e. prenatal services), independent of the mother's eligibility and immigration status. Hence, even unborn children whose mothers are undocumented immigrants are eligible for prenatal services based on the fact that they will be U.S. citizens upon their birth.

When the federal government established the CHIP program in 2002, Nebraska chose to implement it by expanding Medicaid rather than establishing a separate State CHIP program. Medicaid, however, does not include unborn children as eligible recipients independent of the mother. Consequently, the state of Nebraska was recently notified that it could no longer provide prenatal services to unborn children whose parents don't qualify for Medicaid. In order to restore this vitally important coverage, Nebraska can apply for the Unborn Child Option under CHIP.

On February 17, LB 1110 was introduced by Sen. Kathy Campbell to authorize the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services to apply for the Unborn Child Option under CHIP. The bill also clarifies that providing prenatal services under CHIP to unborn children does not violate a law passed last year by the Legislature to deny public benefits to undocumented individuals.

Continuing to provide prenatal services to unborn children is an important pro-life matter. Denying these services would be a terrible injustice that could do great harm to the lives of children who would no longer receive critical prenatal care. What's worse, the lack of coverage for such care could be a decisive factor in leading some pregnant women to choose abortion over childbirth.

Some policymakers have expressed concern about providing prenatal services to the unborn children of undocumented mothers. It must be emphasized that the true beneficiary of this coverage and care is not the mother but her unborn child, who will be a U.S. citizen upon his/her birth. Regardless of the need for sound immigration policy, the well-being of vulnerable unborn children is paramount.

ACTION

Contact your state senator by phone or e-mail. Your senator's contact information is available at http://nebraskalegislature.gov/senators/senator_list.php or by calling the Capitol at 402-471-2311.

It is critically important for pro-life Nebraskans to voice their support for prenatal services for unborn children in low-income families.

MESSAGE

Please support LB 1110. It is an urgent pro-life matter to ensure that unborn children continue to receive the prenatal services they need and deserve.

TIMEFRAME

Please contact your senator immediately or at least by the end of February.