

CATHOLICS FOR CHOICE

IN GOOD CONSCIENCE

March 15, 2017

Oregon State Legislature
House of Representatives
House Committee on Health Care

Dear Chairman Greenlick and Members of the Committee,

Catholics for Choice shapes and advances sexual and reproductive ethics that are based on justice, reflect a commitment to women's well-being and respect and affirm the capacity of women to make moral decisions about their lives. We serve as a voice for the vast majority of Catholics across the United States—more than 450,000 in Oregon—who support access to comprehensive reproductive health services.

We urge you to support HB 3391, a bill that would protect coverage for reproductive health services in Oregon. Our support for this bill is grounded in our Catholic faith and social justice tradition.

As Catholics, we are called by our faith to follow our consciences in all matters of moral decision-making and to respect the right of others to do the same. This includes a woman's right to make decisions about her reproductive healthcare. Catholics' respect for conscience leads us to support the conscience-based decisions that each person makes, regardless of how we might make that decision ourselves. In fact, six in ten Catholics believe abortion can be a moral choice.

Our Catholic social justice tradition compels us to advocate for the poor and marginalized. This is why a majority of Catholics believe that insurance plans, whether government or private, should include coverage for contraceptives and abortion care. We support HB 3391 because it will ensure that Oregon residents, including those in rural areas, have coverage to access the reproductive health services and medications they need. HB 3391 will enable each woman in Oregon to make the conscience-based decision that are best for her and her family, regardless of where she works, how much money she makes, or where she lives.

Catholic tradition also reveres the idea of authentic religious liberty, where all citizens are able to enjoy their civil rights and are respected as human beings free from discrimination based on another's beliefs. Our founding fathers believed in freedom of religion and freedom from religion. We should ensure that our laws and policies protect the freedom to make conscience-based healthcare decisions for all and not the privileged few. This is consistent with the opinion of three-quarters of Catholics who disagree with public institutions using religious beliefs to deny coverage or services to individuals.

Catholics across Oregon support policies that respect the ability of women and men to make moral decisions about their lives. HB 3391 protects that right by ensuring Oregon residents have coverage for their reproductive health decisions, based on their conscience and in consultation with their doctors.

Catholics for Choice urges this committee to advance HB 3391 through the legislature. It is what Catholics in Oregon want and it is the right thing to do.

Sincerely,



Jon O'Brien
President

PRESIDENT

Jon O'Brien

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