



## Protecting Human Life

For the Church, there is no distinction between defending human life and promoting the dignity of the human person.

The Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops' work at the Texas Legislature starts with supporting efforts to fund health care providers whose goal is to prevent women from making the tragic mistake of choosing abortion. This also means we oppose all public funding to abortion providers, including funds for the use of contraceptives.

While abortion is one of the most frequently performed surgical procedures in the United States, data on medical complications is not available. Currently abortion complication reporting is ineffective and lacks enforcement, particularly when complications are treated outside of the abortion facility. This prevents policy makers from having accurate information about the complications of abortion and skews data on maternal morbidity outcomes.

Requiring primary health care providers, hospitals and emergency medical service providers to report on abortion-related treatment; establishing parental notification

laws; prohibiting lawsuits for “wrongful birth” and other legislation that requires transparency and accountability for a largely unregulated industry can assist in raising awareness of the wrongs suffered by women who subject themselves to abortion.

### **Burial of children lost to abortion**

The child lost through abortion is also honored in legislation strongly supported by the TCCB. Catholic cemeteries are stepping forward, working with the Catholic bishops in Texas, in response to ongoing efforts to provide a proper burial for children lost to abortion. Many hospitals already cooperate with families, funeral homes, and cemeteries to provide a proper burial for children who die in utero. Catholic cemeteries in many (arch)dioceses, such as the Archdiocese of San Antonio, have provided these burials for years. The service is being extended to children lost by abortion and will be provided at no charge.

The Texas bishops firmly urge all Texans to join them in defending the life and human dignity of all who live in Texas, from conception to natural death.

# Where we stand

The TCCB has reviewed the following legislation for the 85th Texas Legislature:



**HB 144** requires monthly electronic abortion reporting by abortion facilities. The TCCB supports this bill which increases the transparency of abortion reporting data.



**HB 201** requires the proper burial or cremation of unborn children lost through miscarriage or abortion. The TCCB supports this bill to provide proper respect to the remains of unborn children.



**HB 223** allows state funds to be used to pay for child care services for students at risk of dropping out. The TCCB supports this bill to discourage dropouts and provide assistance with child care for teen parents.



**HB 239** requires reporting from jails regarding the implementation of policies for adequate care to pregnant prisoners. The TCC supports this bill to improve care to pregnant women confined in jail.



**HB 274** extends the Down Syndrome education act to include awareness and treatment referral information for spina bifida. The TCCB supports this bill to increase parental awareness of resources to assist parents whose children are diagnosed with spina bifida.



**HB 434** prohibits lawsuits for wrongful birth. The TCCB supports this bill which recognizes that all children deserve to be born.



**HB 439** changes the advance directives form to remove a reference to the law's applicability to pregnant women. The TCCB opposes this bill because it decreases transparency.



**HB 1113** prohibits abortion coverage on the health care benefit exchanges and other insurance plans. The TCCB supports this bill to ensure that Texans are not required to fund abortion when they purchase insurance.

"The Church forcefully maintains this link between life ethics and social ethics, fully aware that 'a society lacks solid foundations when, on the one hand, it asserts values such as the dignity of the person, justice and peace, but then, on the other hand, radically acts to the contrary by allowing or tolerating a variety of ways in which human life is devalued and violated, especially where it is weak or marginalized.'" (*Caritas in Veritate*, Pope Benedict XVI, no. 15)



**SB 8** bans partial birth abortion including the creation of a criminal penalty for the physician and a civil cause of action for the father. This bill also prohibits fetal tissue research from abortion victims. The TCCB supports this bill to allow prosecution and penalty for the crime of partial birth abortion and to prevent the sale of the bodies of children lost to the tragedy of abortion.



**SB 20** prohibits abortion coverage on the health care benefit exchanges and other insurance plans. The TCCB supports this bill to ensure that Texans are not required to fund abortion when they purchase insurance.



**SB 25** prohibits lawsuits for wrongful birth. The TCCB supports this bill which recognizes that all children deserve to be born.



**SB 139** includes abortion facilities, birthing centers, and drug treatment programs in agency regulation for adverse actions. The TCCB supports this bill to increase transparency of providers with adverse rulings.



**SB 164** allows teens who are pregnant or have children to consent to medical treatment for contraception without their parent's involvement. The TCCB opposes this bill as an erosion of parental rights.

You can find more information on the Texas Conference of Catholic Bishops' policy priorities at [www.txcatholic.org/public-policy](http://www.txcatholic.org/public-policy).