



New York State Catholic Conference

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Statement of the Bishops of New York State

Following is a statement of Timothy Cardinal Dolan and the Bishops of New York State:

We are profoundly distressed by the introduction of a bill in New York State today that would ease restrictions in state law on late-term abortion and runs the serious risk of broadly expanding abortion access at all stages of gestation. This legislation would add a broad and undefined “health” exception for late-term abortion and would repeal the portion of the penal law that governs abortion policy, opening the door for non-doctors to perform abortions and potentially decriminalizing even forced or coerced abortions. In addition, we find the conscience protection in the bill to be vague and insufficient, and we are concerned about the religious liberty of our health facilities. While the bill’s proponents say it will simply “codify” federal law, it is selective in its codification. Nowhere does it address the portions of federal laws that limit abortion, such as the ban on taxpayer funding, the ban on partial birth abortion or protections for unborn victims of violence.

As the pastors of more than 7.2 million Catholic New Yorkers, we fully oppose this measure, and urge all our faithful people to do the same, vigorously and unapologetically. We invite all women and men of good will to join in this effort and defeat this serious attempt to expand abortion availability in our state and to codify the most radical abortion proposals of any state in the nation.

We support the first nine points in the Governor’s agenda that enhance the true dignity of women. We commit ourselves to examining those proposals and working with the legislature on any and all efforts that help guarantee real equity for all women and men. Our position on these issues will be consistent with all the efforts of the Catholic Church throughout the world to enhance the dignity of women. The direct taking of the life of a child in the womb in no way enhances a woman’s dignity.

Instead of expanding abortion and making abortions even more prevalent, we would like to protect both the woman and the child in the womb. In New York, where one in every three pregnancies ends in abortion (and upwards of 6 in 10 in certain communities), it is clear that we as a state have lost sight of that child’s dignity. We pledge all our efforts to defeat this proposal. We call on all pro-life New Yorkers to stand together with us and with all the leadership in Albany who share our conviction that we have no need for such a bill to become law. We need instead to enhance and promote the life and dignity of all human beings from the moment of conception to the moment of natural death.

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