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Oral PROPONENT testimony in favor of SB 527, AN ACT concerning abortion; relating to unlawful coercion to obtain an abortion; creating the crime of coercion to obtain an abortion; providing the penalties therefor; providing for enhanced criminal penalties for offenses committed with the intent to compel a woman to obtain an abortion; amending K.S.A. 21-6804 and repealing the existing section.

TO: Chair Senator Thompson and members of Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs

FROM: Lucrecia Nold, Public Policy Specialist, Kansas Catholic Conference

DATE: March 19, 2024

Dear Chair Thompson and committee members,

My name is Lucrecia Nold, and I serve as the Policy Specialist for the Kansas Catholic Conference, representing the Catholic Bishops of Kansas. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony as a PROPONENT to bill SB 527.

The Catholic Church consistently recognizes the value and dignity of all human life- from conception to natural death. This includes the woman who has found herself in an unplanned pregnancy and her unborn child.

Part of acknowledging the value and dignity of all individuals, is that of allowing them their freedom to choose. Freedom is essential to everyone, not only as a sign of respect but for the health and well-being of society.

This is exemplified in paragraph 1738 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Where it states, "Freedom is exercised in relationships between human beings. Every human person, created in the image of God, has the natural right to be recognized as a free and responsible being. All owe to each other this duty of respect. The *right to the exercise of freedom*, especially in moral and religious matters, is an inalienable requirement of the dignity of the human person. This right must be recognized and protected by civil authority within the limits of the common good and public order."

Simply put, interfering with one's freedom is disrespectful and morally degrading. Therefore, society has an invested interest in protecting one's freedom. Especially when an individual is threatening the freedom of a woman who is wanting to choose life for her unborn child.

Therefore, the Kansas Catholic Conference fully supports SB 527. As we recognize the importance of freedom among all, especially pregnant women. We strongly encourage this committee to support SB 527. Please reach out if there are any questions.

Thank you,
Lucrecia Nold



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