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Proponent Testimony for SB 85 – Simon’s Law

Michael Schuttloffel, Executive Director, Kansas Catholic Conference

Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs

February 16, 2017

Chairman LaTurner and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for holding a hearing on SB 85, also known as “Simon’s Law.” Simon’s Law requires parental consent before a physician can attach a Do Not Resuscitate order (DNR) to an unemancipated minor’s medical chart. This is ethically and morally appropriate, and is as well a matter of common sense.

We are extremely disturbed by the testimony of parents who report that Do Not Resuscitate orders were placed in the medical charts of their children without parental knowledge or consent. Parents, who have primary responsibility for the welfare of their children, must never be excluded from decisions over their children’s health care. Children’s health care decisions, especially those involving end-of-life decision making, should be made through a consultative process between parent and physician.

The intrinsic human dignity of each and every person, including and especially children, should always be upheld. It is extraordinarily troubling that physicians may have allowed morally distorted judgments about the quality of life of profoundly ill children to interfere with their ethical obligation to their patients and their patients’ parents.

Simon’s Law takes a measured approach in addressing important questions of parental rights and end-of-life decision making, and we are pleased to support it. We urge the committee to approve Simon’s Law and we thank you for your consideration.

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