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Oral Proponent Testimony – SCR 1606
“New York Reproductive Health Act”
Chuck Weber, Executive Director, Kansas Catholic Conference

Kansas House Federal and State Affairs Committee
March 7, 2019

Honorable Chairman Barker and members of the Kansas House Education Committee:

Thank you for the courtesy of this hearing on SCR 1606, the “New York Reproductive Health Act,” legislation representing a dangerously dark turn in the conversation about life and abortion in America.

Consider the many actors, if you will, in the very real life and death drama of an unplanned pregnancy.

First, the child and the mother. They are inextricably and forever tied to one another on many levels—physically, mentally and spiritually. They may be unwilling participants in this drama. The circumstance of each pregnancy is as unique as one’s own DNA. We must acknowledge that some women in crisis pregnancies are victims of coercion or sexual abuse. Many suddenly find themselves financially and socially desperate. Ending the life of their child is heartbreaking, but to a mother in crisis it looks like a solution. The data tells us relinquishing a child for adoption is even more difficult.

What about the father of the child? He’s often forgotten, perhaps intentionally so. He often ignores the responsibility of the life he has helped create. Financially and socially, he may bear little, if any, burden.

There are countless other supporting roles. What of the selfless and heroic grandparents sacrificing their time and money to care for and nurture the child of a crisis pregnancy? What about working men and women whose taxes pay for public welfare benefits supporting the child? What about elected officials and judges tasked with the responsibility for seeking what’s best for citizens?

Here in Kansas, about a dozen children die each week through live dismemberment abortion, despite state laws to the contrary. Conversely, the Stan Clark Pregnancy Maintenance Initiative, a public/not-

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for-profit partnership helps women in crisis who choose to carry their children to term, providing a wide range of services, including adoption. What about crisis pregnancy center volunteers? Many of these volunteers are women who have experienced a crisis pregnancy themselves. What about their efforts, far beyond just birth, as they seek to nurture and enrich the life of the child and the mother?

In a word, this conversation is complex, on many levels. So what to do?

There is a term often used in Catholic circles called "the common good." Can we not agree that ideally, for sake of the "common good," a married wife and husband should freely come together in a sacred and joyful physical union? And that the fruit of that union, that freely given love, is the child, welcomed into the family with a mother and a father? The social science data tells us this is the ideal setting. We know this in our hearts as well.

But we also know that the ideal is not always the reality of today. The data tells us that in America, 40% of children are not born into a family. This growing phenomenon cannot be fixed solely with legislation and resolutions. **The change must be cultural.** It begins organically in our homes, our families and our churches with an authentic teaching and discussion about human sexuality and the nature and beauty of the family. We must teach the unfathomable value of each and every human life. We must teach that an intentional abortion is always morally wrong.

The role of elected officials in this discussion is crucial. Your voices mean something. The State of New York's new abortion measure, shamelessly signed into law by a Catholic governor and literally cheered by the state assembly, is a deplorable act. It is intrinsically evil. It must be called out and condemned for what it is.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of SCR 1606. We respectfully ask the Federal and State Affairs Committee report this resolution favorably.

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