



Senate Committee on Health Care
SB 822
Thursday, February 20, 2025
Sister Veronica Schueler, FSE
Director, Oregon Catholic Conference

Chair Patterson, Vice-Chair Hayden, and Members of the Committee,

The Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon strives to transform Oregon into a sanctuary where every human being is deeply valued and protected. We believe in protecting the inherent dignity of every human person, born and unborn. We also believe in the integrity of the human body and are opposed to gender-affirming care, especially for minors under the age of 18. SB 822 is contrary to our moral vision for the following reasons:

- It mandates that insurance carriers contract with providers for abortion services and gender-affirming care and requires the carriers to pay for those services
- It requires that employers who offer health insurance to their employees pay for abortion service and gender-affirming care which violates their religious beliefs.
- There are no religious or faith-based exceptions, nor are there conscience protections for those who may be philosophically opposed to participating in such services. SB 822 poses a serious question of whether religious employers, including religious health insurance carriers, would still be protected under the current religious exemption laws.

On behalf of the Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon and the Diocese of Baker, we ask you to oppose SB 822 for the following reasons:

Oregon has one of the worst records in the nation for providing substance abuse and mental health care. SB 822 mandates insurance carriers to contract and employ providers for abortion services and gender-affirming care under the auspices of network adequacy requirements. Our healthcare systems are already under strain to ensure adequate healthcare services are provided for all Oregonians. It is incumbent upon the state to evaluate the current services – mental health and substance use - required under network adequacy requirements and ensure Oregonians are receiving those services first before mandating others.

SB 822 is unnecessary and redundant as Oregon liberally provides access and funding for abortion services and gender-affirming care under other measures. Please oppose SB 822. We do not need this bill and it is a threat to life and to freedom of conscience.

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