



Senate Committee on Health Care
Senate Bill 535
April 4, 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 are opposed to healthcare initiatives which do not align with our moral vision of respecting the inherent dignity of every human person.

Senate Bill 535 provides that employer and individual health benefit plans (insurers) must reimburse for the costs of infertility treatments, including a host of procedures for in vitro fertilization (IVF), such as oocyte retrieval, intrauterine insemination, and fresh and frozen embryo transfers. Catholic moral teaching prohibits the use of IVF because:

- a) We believe that every child has a right to be conceived through loving sexual intercourse between a husband and a wife. Where infertility exists, legal adoption is an option.
- b) IVF procedures are very hard on the couple, especially the woman.
- c) The process of IVF creates spare embryos (human lives) which are then either destroyed, which is abortion, or frozen for use later.
- d) IVF procedures are not permitted by the Ethical and Religious Directives which govern Catholic health care providers.

SB 535 requires that health benefit plan providers pay for and support medical procedures which do not align with their beliefs and values. It forces employers to pay into plans which may violate their religious beliefs and require beneficiaries to participate in plans with non-aligning values. The bill specifically includes “individual coverage through a trust, association or similar group, regardless of the situs of the policy or contract.” This would directly impact the Catholic Church and other religious organizations which rely on self-insurance and health trusts to serve the needs of their members and raises a significant religious discrimination issue.

The suffering of those who live with infertility is real and must be met with compassion. However, mandating that insurers, employers and beneficiaries participate in the IVF industry and turn a blind eye to the millions of unwanted embryos it creates is not the answer. This legislation does not respect the inherent dignity of any human being.

Please vote NO on Senate Bill 535.

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