



PARENTAL NOTIFICATION
SB 5156
Testimony
Senate Law & Justice Committee
February 6, 2013

Thank you, Senator Padden and members of the Committee. My name is Mark Miloscia and I am here this afternoon on behalf of the Washington State Catholic Conference, which represents the Catholic Bishops of Washington State on issues of public policy. The Catholic Conference strongly supports SB 5156, requiring parental notification for minors seeking an abortion.

Catholics, as faithful citizens believe that society owes much of its stability to the strength of the family, and that parents are the first and most important educators and guardians of their children. Parents have a fundamental right to decide how to raise and care for their children. They also have a responsibility to teach values, to guide their children and to provide for them. No institution, paid worker, or volunteer can substitute for the committed love, daily sacrifice and hard work of parents in caring for their children. Parents are forever responsible, forever bound to the best interests of their children. Respect for the family must be reflected in every policy and program.” All of us know in our hearts as parents, that safeguarding the physical, psychological, moral and spiritual health of our children is our primary duty and responsibility.

SB 5156 recognizes that parents’ first obligation is to protect the health and welfare of their minor children. To meet this responsibility, a parent has a right to know when a minor is to undergo medical treatment, regardless of its form. The law and society protect this right with regard to other medical procedures, including surgery and diagnostic treatment, and it should protect this right with regard to abortion.

Parental consent is required for a doctor to perform surgery or even for school personnel to give an aspirin to a minor child. The only exception is for a minor child to have an abortion. SB 5156 does not even require consent, but only that parents be notified. Underage children are not mature and need the loving guidance of their parents, especially in decisions that will have life-long effects. The state has a vital interest in preserving, and strengthening parental integrity.

As you consider this bill, we would ask you to consider the larger societal and individual implications.

- Do we send a message to a pregnant teen that this medical/moral decision is hers alone to make?
- Do we encourage families to surround a pregnant teen with love and support?
- Do we honor the fact that life’s difficult decisions are complex and relational?
- Do we continue to foster and expedient violent solutions?

In conclusion I ask you to please support SB 5156.

Thank you for your attention and your committed public service.