



**MICHIGAN
CATHOLIC**
C O N F E R E N C E

Memorandum

To: Chairman Jeff Irwin and Members of the Senate Housing and Human Services Committee

From: Rebecca Mastee, J.D., Policy Advocate

Date: 16 October 2024

Re: Opposition to Senate Bill 822

Michigan Catholic Conference (MCC) is the official public policy voice of the Catholic Church in our state. While we recognize many positive aspects of this bill package and its intent to help mothers and address disparities in maternal health, we have concerns with Senate Bill 822.

The scenario being considered by Senate Bill 822 is recognizably tragic and heartbreaking - the possibility of a mother dying while she is pregnant with child. Because these difficult circumstances involve two human beings, life-sustaining treatment should not be withdrawn from a pregnant woman if continued treatment may benefit her unborn child. In light of this, we oppose Senate Bill 822 as written.

The current statute does not allow a patient advocate designation to be used to make a medical treatment decision to withhold or withdraw treatment that will result in the death of a pregnant patient. However, it does not necessarily require every medical intervention either – especially those deemed futile or disproportionate. These are very nuanced situations. Each decision should be case-specific and made contemporaneously, considering the current facts and circumstances.

Of primary concern is that this bill appears to allow a patient advocate designation to direct, in advance of unknown circumstances, that life-sustaining treatment is not desired, regardless of the stage of one's pregnancy or the likelihood of the baby's survival.

While the Church generally recognizes that one's wishes for the use or withdrawal of life-sustaining procedures should be respected, in this specific situation of a woman who is pregnant, another human being is involved. The great concern is when that other human being, the unborn child, is alive. Forgoing such treatment will likely result in two deaths, the mother and her baby. However, the child's life has value and should be offered protective measures if care can be provided proportionately and without undue burden to the unborn child and the family.

For these reasons, MCC opposes Senate Bill 822 and encourages further consideration amid these tragic circumstances for the unborn baby that is still alive.