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Written PROPONENT testimony in favor of HB 2653, AN ACT concerning children and families; relating to orders of child support; providing for child support for unborn children from the date of conception; amending K.S.A. 20-165, 23-2205 and 23-3001 and repealing the existing sections.

TO: Chair Representative Carpenter and members of the Federal and State Affairs Committee

FROM: Lucrecia Nold, Public Policy Specialist, Kansas Catholic Conference

DATE: February 15, 2024

Dear Chair Carpenter and committee members,

My name is Lucrecia Nold and I serve as the Public Policy Specialist for the Kansas Catholic Conference, the public policy voice of the Catholic Bishops of Kansas. I wish to begin by thanking you for the opportunity to provide PROPONENT testimony for HB 2653.

A sad reality of today's society is how women are too often being used and exploited within relationships where they have a male partner. When their sexual encounters result in a pregnancy, far too many men—now fathers of preborn children they helped to create—abandon the woman who now alone must carry the consequences of their actions.

Catholic Church teaching, supported and affirmed by reproductive science, has long held that even nascent life, from the moment of conception, personifies the miracle of a unique and precious human being worthy of protection.

Catholics also believe that children and families best thrive and flourish when both mother and father are present in marriage. However, we do recognize that this is not always a reality for many. In those situations, we want to provide the best support possible to the mother who is most often solely responsible for raising the child.

One way to help is by ensuring the father of a child provides financial support through mandated child support payments. Alleviating at least some of the financial burdens a mother encounters, beginning with the child's conception, is a moral imperative. These financial responsibilities can be substantial and can include prenatal care, loss of wages due to "morning sickness" and other expenses.

Because of this, we believe the father should help share in the financial responsibility to care for both woman and child beginning at conception, and not just from the moment the child leaves the mother's womb and enters the world at birth.

The Kansas Catholic Conference supports HB 2653, as we believe an absent father needs to be held accountable for his actions, including responsibility from the moment new life is created and the life and health of the mother is impacted--not several months later.

Women who become mothers of a child facing the abandonment of the child's father need and deserve better financial support and security. The child deserves this support as well as a precursor to a fully alive and flourishing life.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony in favor of HB 2653. If you have any questions, please contact me with the information provided below.



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