



Bioethics Public Policy Report February 2024

The Bioethics Public Policy Report is a collaboration between dioceses, parishes, Knights of Columbus councils, grassroots organizations, and The National Catholic Bioethics Center to inform the laity about developments in bioethics and human dignity.



National

- Sen. Tim Scott (R-SC) introduced a bill that would protect Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds for pro-life pregnancy centers. The bill comes after the Biden administration attempted to disallow the use of such funds for pregnancy centers through federal regulations this past October.
- A bill introduced by Catholic Rep. Chris Smith (R-NJ), the Frederick Douglass Trafficking Victims Prevention and Protection Reauthorization Act, overwhelmingly passed in the House by a vote of 414-11. The act reauthorizes the Trafficking Victims Protection Act and will “expand successful anti-trafficking programs to bolster the fight against modern-day slavery.”



Federal Courts

- The Supreme Court will hear oral arguments for *Alliance for Hippocratic Medicine v. Food and Drug Administration* on March 26. The suit resulted after the US Food and Drug Administration removed restrictions previously in place for the prescription of mifepristone, the first of two pills involved in chemical abortion, which cuts off progesterone to the unborn child, starving him or her to death. The FDA rescinded an in-person prescription requirement for mifepristone, stating that it would be a “burden on the health care delivery system.” The Fifth Circuit affirmed a lower court ruling in August 2023 requiring the FDA to reimpose pre-2016 restrictions on the drug pending the appeal to the Supreme Court.
- An Indiana Catholic husband and wife filed a petition to the Supreme Court after the state removed their son from their home because they tried to treat his “transgender identity” as a mental health problem rather than “affirm” the behavior. In their petition, they note that the state found that they were fit parents and that there was no evidence of abuse, but nevertheless, the state removed their son “over an ideological dispute.”

States



- Alabama’s supreme court has ruled that frozen embryos are children under state law. In a ruling of 8-1, the court decided that the state’s Wrongful Death of a Minor Act applies to children “regardless of their location,” since it is “sweeping and unqualified.” Within this sweep, the court said, were “children, born and unborn, without limitation.”
- Archbishop William Lori of Baltimore, Wilton Cardinal Gregory of Washington, DC, and Bishop William Koenig of Wilmington wrote an open letter denouncing the advance of a bill for assisted suicide in the Maryland General Assembly. The bishops said that it was “deeply illogical” for the legislature to introduce such a bill at a time when the suicide rate is skyrocketing, as it would only facilitate the issue.
- Tennessee’s house advanced a bill proposed by Rep. Jason Zachary (R) that would ban obtaining abortions for minors without parental consent, which could encompass driving a minor out of state to procure an abortion. The bill now needs to advance in the full house and senate chambers and be signed by Gov. Bill Lee (R). Tennessee already bans abortions throughout pregnancy, except in situations where it is necessary to save the mother’s life.

The *Bioethics Public Policy Report* is made possible through the generous support of the Catholic Health Care Leadership Alliance.

For the full report, visit www.ncbcenter.org/bioethics-public-policy-reports.