



Bioethics Public Policy Report March 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

- Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-MS) blocked a bill by Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) that would have created a “right to access in-vitro fertilization (IVF)” and surrogacy. She cited that the bill, as it was written, “explicitly waives the Religious Freedom Restoration Act” and makes numerous pro-life organizations subject to civil liability. Duckworth had sought to pass the bill by unanimous consent, but Hyde-Smith’s speech opposed to the bill blocked it.



Federal Courts

- Students for Life filed an amicus brief in *US Food and Drug Administration v. Alliance for Hippocratic Medicine*, the upcoming case before the Supreme Court on chemical abortion, citing environmental concerns. With the methods used currently, Students for Life warned that, in at-home chemical abortions, the remains of the children were getting flushed away into the sewage system alongside the chemical residue from the pills themselves.
- Senator Jim Risch (R-ID) and Representative Russ Fulcher (R-ID) filed a bicameral amicus brief in support of their state’s pro-life law, which the Biden administration seeks to invalidate under the Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act (EMTALA), which the administration says requires hospitals to perform abortions.
- Christian pregnancy resource center First Choice has filed a petition to the Supreme Court asking for the federal district court to hear its case against New Jersey Attorney General Matthew Platkin, alleging selective targeting based on its pro-life values. The petition comes after the lower court dismissed their initial case for lack of jurisdiction, despite the fact that a constitutional question is directly implicated by the case.



States

- A bill was recently proposed in Connecticut that would allow human composting instead of burial or cremation. The Catholic bishops of Connecticut have voiced their opposition to the bill as insufficiently respectful of the human body, since by this process there is “nothing [distinguishable] of the body to be placed in a casket or an urn and laid to rest in a sacred place where Christian faithful can visit for prayer and remembrance.”
- In South Dakota, State Representative Taylor Rehfeldt (R) is seeking to require the government to create a video explaining that treatment for ectopic pregnancies is not illegal under the state’s pro-life laws. The proposed bill comes at a time when doctors seem to be uncertain as to whether the law allows them to treat such cases and how they are to treat them.
- Following the Alabama Supreme Court decision finding that frozen embryos are persons under state law, Alabama republicans have passed a bill that “shield[s] providers from prosecution and civil lawsuits ‘for providing goods or services related to [IVF] except for an act or omission that is both intentional and not arising from or related to IVF services.’” The bill does not undo what the supreme court ruled, but it allows IVF clinics to continue to operate.

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