



Statement by Bishop Burbidge and Bishop Knestout on Virginia Senate Passage of Abortion Expansion Legislation

January 22, 2021

Bishop Michael F. Burbidge of the Diocese of Arlington and Bishop Barry C. Knestout of the Diocese of Richmond issued the following statement on today's Virginia Senate passage of abortion expansion legislation:

“We express our deep disappointment with today's Virginia Senate vote to infuse the Commonwealth's health benefits exchange with abortion for any reason, funded in significant part with Virginians' tax dollars.

Created pursuant to the federal Affordable Care Act, the health exchange is a virtual 'marketplace' for those shopping for health insurance. Taxes pay for managing the exchange, and for subsidizing health plans of tens of thousands of low- and middle-income Virginians using the exchange to provide healthcare for themselves and their families. Ten years ago, our Virginia Catholic Conference advocated – and succeeded in attaining – an important provision keeping most abortions out of the exchange. Keeping taxpayer-subsidized abortion-on-demand out of the exchange is consistent with the federal Hyde Amendment, in place for more than four decades and which most Americans support. Tragically, the Senate today took a far different path. Replacing the current life-saving restrictions on abortion with a policy of abortion coverage without limits in our state exchange is drastic, dangerous and will result in the tragic end to more unborn lives. We understand the House of Delegates will be voting on this policy next week. We urge them to reject this abortion expansion and preserve the sensible, life-affirming health exchange policy Virginia has had for the past 10 years.

Abortion is not healthcare; it ends lives instead of healing them. We express our deep disappointment with this vote on a very solemn day in U.S. history. On this day when we reflect in particular on the more than 60 million unborn lives lost since the *Roe v. Wade* decision, and on every day, we continue to advocate with relentless determination for healthcare that affirms every life, born and unborn.”

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