



A Passionate Voice for Compassionate Care®

September 23, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy:

On behalf of the Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA), the national leadership organization of more than 2,200 Catholic health care systems, hospitals, long-term care facilities, service providers and organizations, I am writing to oppose the Women's Health Protection Act of 2021 (WHPA), H.R. 3755/S.1975.

For nearly 300 years the Catholic health ministry has been at the forefront of providing high-quality and affordable maternal health to expectant mothers and their children. Each year Catholic hospitals serve nearly 5 million inpatients and deliver almost 500,000 babies. They have done this all while continuing to upgrade and update their efforts to provide high-quality maternal health care. Today, over 324 Catholic hospitals have specialized obstetric units to care for pregnant women and 25 percent offer neonatal intensive care units (NICUs) to care for the most vulnerable babies at birth.

This commitment to mothers and their children is rooted in our shared belief that every person is a treasure, every life a sacred gift and every human being having inherent dignity. The Women's Health Protection Act not only undermines this belief but more directly to the work of Catholic health care, could disregard federal and state conscience laws that protect the right of Catholic health care providers to decline to participate in abortion.

The bill's elimination of the protections afforded to faith-based health care providers under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) and its approach to reviewing state or federal laws on abortion, including conscience related protections, would fundamentally undermine the long held bipartisan support for faith-based providers to provide quality health care services in accordance with their mission and deeply held religious and moral convictions. RFRA passed Congress with nearly universal bipartisan support and provides an important means for protecting the fundamental right to religious freedom against other important government interests.

Catholic health providers remain committed to providing high-quality prenatal and maternal health care to mothers and their children. The Women's Health Protection Act fundamentally impacts the ability of faith-based health care providers to provide these services in accordance with their belief. We therefore urge you to oppose the Women's Health Protection Act of 2021.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sr. Mary Haddad". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sr. Mary Haddad,
RSM President and CEO