



United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

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May 27, 2021

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development and the Committee on Pro-Life Activities of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), we write in support of the bipartisan Maternal Health Quality Improvement Act (S. 1675) and Rural Maternal and Obstetric Modernization of Services Act (S. 1491), which both help to address the high rates of preventable maternal deaths in the United States. We have been alarmed by the data showing that these rates are not only high, but have continued to increase over the past 20 years. We are pleased that members of Congress are working to address this problem and we urge you and your colleagues to continue working to lower rates of maternal mortality and morbidity.

These pieces of legislation take positive steps to defend and promote life by promoting best practices in maternal health care delivery, training health professionals on implicit bias and improved maternal care in order to address racial and ethnic disparities, promoting integrated health care services to pregnant and postpartum women and their infants, and improving care and access to care in rural areas where the maternal mortality rate is particularly high.

Improving maternal health is a worthy, yet complex goal that will require a long term commitment and involve a range of interventions. As you go forward, we especially encourage you to find ways to promote affordable and continuous health coverage, including postpartum coverage. Our longstanding moral principles on healthcare can guide you in this effort. While no single bill will solve the problem, both the Maternal Health Quality Improvement Act and Rural Maternal and Obstetric Modernization of Services Act are the fruit of strong bipartisan collaboration and a step in the right direction. We stand ready to work with you in advancing the goal of improving maternal health.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Paul S. Coakley in black ink.

Most Reverend Paul S. Coakley
Archbishop of Oklahoma City
Chairman, Committee on Domestic Justice
and Human Development

Handwritten signature of Joseph F. Naumann in black ink.

Most Reverend Joseph F. Naumann
Archbishop of Kansas City in Kansas
Chairman, Committee on Pro-Life Activities

¹ <https://www.usccb.org/resources/letter-congress-regarding-moral-principles-providing-health-care-during-covid-19-pandemic>