



D.C. CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

ADVANCING GOSPEL VALUES IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety Collaborative Reproductive Act of 2013

**Submitted by
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The D.C. Catholic Conference represents the public policy interests of the Archdiocese of Washington within the District of Columbia. We submit this testimony with regard to the newly renamed *Collaborative Reproduction Act of 2013*. We thank the Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety for the opportunity to express our strong opposition to this legislation.

The Conference believes that the life, health, and dignity of the human person must be recognized in every human being from conception to natural death through the light of faith and reason. Accordingly, the Conference associates itself with the National Catholic Bioethics Center and the Archdiocese of Washington's Department of Life Issues both of which submitted written testimony opposing the legislation.

While the Conference identifies with some of the public witnesses who feel the pain and deprivation resulting from infertility, they can build families through adoption without the moral, bioethical, physical, psychological, legal, and social complications commonly associated with surrogacy. Unfortunately the Conference notes an increasingly dangerous trend today to pursue one's personal satisfaction at the expense of individuals, institutions, and the common good. All of these great goods become a means to an end.

We highlight the most distressing of the many dangerous aspects of the legislation.

The legislation is contrary to the unity of marriage and dignity of procreation. It commercializes reproduction whereby numerous embryos are manufactured in a petri dish followed by a process of selective reduction (destruction) for most of them based on their lack of desirability or viability before or after implantation. Others are frozen for future use. This practice is not merely utilitarian but eugenic in its nature.

The legislation radically reorders and redefines the concept of family with little to no regard for the surrogate children's rights and interests which turns the history of marriage and family law on its head so to speak. Their possible needs were barely addressed by the proponents of the legislation during the recent public hearing.

The legislation objectifies and commodifies women for their reproductive services and children as reproductive products as part of a commercial exchange to be paid in full upon delivery. The lucrative nature of the business and lack of fully informed consent makes it even more exploitative and dangerous.

Finally the legislation raises numerous complex and challenging questions about parentage, custody, and status that may not be easily if ever resolved without the prospect of unforeseen legal complications and litigation.

As such the legislation embarks upon a new course of public policy which is fraught with many moral, bioethical, physical, psychological, legal, and social problems in order to accommodate political or ideological agenda.

Therefore we strongly urge the Council to reject the *Collaborative Reproduction Act of 2013*. It would introduce an ugly, unethical, and exploitative business that is ultimately unworthy of the city, its residents, and its values.