



Bioethics Public Policy Report

March 26

State by State

- The Iowa House of Representatives has passed a bill recognizing personhood at the moment of fertilization, which, if signed into law, would increase penalties for the death of the unborn person. The bill expressly provides that an unborn child is “an individual organism of the species homo sapiens from the moment of fertilization to live birth,” which would grant legal protections to the child. For further information, click [here](#).
- 16 state attorneys general have signed a joint letter threatening legal action against the State of Maine for a bill in Maine’s legislature that would extend legal protections to out-of-state citizens seeking transgender medical procedures. For further information, click [here](#).
- Nebraska has proposed a ballot measure that would amend the State’s constitution to provide protection for unborn children in the second and third trimesters, allowing abortions after 12 weeks only in cases of medical emergency. If passed, Nebraska would be the first State to provide constitutional protections for the unborn. For further information, click [here](#).
- Pro-Life Colorado and National March for Life are organizing the State’s first March for Life in Denver. The March is aimed specifically at the “Reproductive Health Equity Act” (RHEA), a law passed in April of 2022 which created a “fundamental right” to abortion by statute. For further information, click [here](#).

Federal Courts

- U.S. bishops are calling for prayers across the nation in advance of the Supreme Court’s hearing for oral arguments on the Fifth Circuit’s restrictions on the chemical abortion pill mifepristone. The Fifth Circuit had imposed those restrictions due to safety concerns. The arguments are scheduled to be heard on March 26, and the USCCB is “inviting Catholics to join a focused effort of prayer” for “the end of abortion and the protection of women and preborn children” from March 25 onward. For further information, click [here](#).
- The District Court of North Dakota ruled in favor of Christian Employers Alliance (CEA), declaring that the Christian organization did not have to pay for “gender transitions” or other procedures prohibited by their religious beliefs for their employees. The suit had been filed after the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) issued two mandates requiring all employers to fund or perform these transgender procedures. For further information, click [here](#).

- The Supreme Court denied certiorari to a married Catholic couple in Indiana whose custody of their son was taken away for failure to affirm his “gender identity,” despite no evidence of abuse in the household. The Court did not comment on why it denied certiorari, which does not necessarily mean that the law enforced by Indiana is constitutional. For further information, click [here](#).

National

- The Department of Justice stated that the State of Utah violated the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Eighth Amendment by failing to obtain a male inmate with “hormone therapy,” signaling that all State prisons will be required to provide transgender procedures for inmates. For further information, click [here](#).
- The Biden administration’s \$7.3 trillion budget makes no mention of the Hyde Amendment or the Dornan Amendment—the two biggest barriers to funding abortions with federal tax money. Much of the money will be going to the Title X family planning program, which sends much of its money to Planned Parenthood for the procurement of abortions. For further information, click [here](#).
- President Biden’s Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced that federal taxpayers’ funds would be expended on IVF and surrogacy for eligible veterans, which includes those in same-sex “marriages.” For further information, click [here](#).
- Sen. Roger Marshall, R-KS, put forth a bill that would halt enforcement of a proposed rule by the Department of Health and Human Services, entitled “Safe and Appropriate Foster Care Placement Requirements for Titles IV–E and IV–B,” which would require that prospective foster parents “establish an environment free of hostility, mistreatment, or abuse based on the child’s LGBTQI+ status.” Sen. Marshall and other critics of the rule point out the ambiguity of the words “hostility, mistreatment, or abuse,” and they note that this includes “unreasonably limit[ing] or deny[ing] a child’s ability to express their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression” or trying to change a child’s sexual orientation. For further information, click [here](#).

International

- French bishops condemned President Emmanuel Macron’s proposal to legalize “aid-in-dying,” a form of euthanasia which Macron described as “a law of fraternity” that “reconciles the autonomy of the individual and the solidarity of the nation.” While the bill only would allow euthanasia in certain limited circumstances, the bishops called its characterization as “a law of fraternity” as “a deception” that could “shift our entire health care system toward death as a solution.” For further information, click [here](#).
- The double referendum to amend Ireland’s constitution via the Family Amendment and the Care Amendment failed by wide margins. The Family Amendment would have added “other durable relationships” other than the family as foundational to Irish society, and the Care Amendment would have struck all references to motherhood from the constitution. For further information, click [here](#).

- National Health Services (NHS) England will no longer be using puberty blockers for minors, except for clinical trials. This news comes as the Gender Identity Development Service run by the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust is slated to shut down at the end of March. For further information, click [here](#).
- The Royal College of Physicians of Ireland has said that it “opposes the introduction of any legislation supportive of assisted suicide because it is contrary to best medical practice.” For further information, click [here](#).

Of Note

- Vice President Kamala Harris was the first vice president in office to visit an abortion clinic in her official capacity. During this visit, she bashed pro-life legislators for “believ[ing] they are in a better position to tell women what they need, to tell women what is in their best interest.” For further information, click [here](#).
- Bishop Michael Burbidge, President of the USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities, issued a statement explaining the Catholic Church’s teaching on IVF in light of the recent public discussion about IVF. To read the statement, click [here](#). For further information, click [here](#).

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