

**For immediate release**

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## **Bishops urge Gov. Inslee: Veto abortion insurance mandate**

Expressing their opposition to a measure passed by the Legislature that would require health plans that include maternity care in Washington to cover elective abortions, Washington's Catholic bishops asked Gov. Jay Inslee to veto the legislation. The state Senate gave final approval to Senate Bill 6219 on a 27-22 vote March 3, sending the bill to the governor's desk.

Citing their belief in "the inherent dignity of every human person from the moment of conception until natural death," the bishops actively opposed the mandate testifying before the state Legislature and meeting with the governor and legislative leadership. The bishops also argued that "at a minimum" constitutional rights to conscience should be protected.

"Even those who do not share our unconditional commitment to the dignity of every person from the moment of conception, have good reason to support our right to exercise our conscience in accord with the teachings of our faith," the bishops said in their letter to the governor dated March 5.

If the governor signs the bill into law, it would "place religious employers and others at legal risk simply for following their religious or moral beliefs and exercising the fundamental right of conscience constitutionally guaranteed to all Americans," the bishops wrote. "By forcibly coercing many of our state's citizens to act against their consciences, the measure would abrogate this most basic and cherished right which we must defend as bishops, as citizens and people of faith."

The governor is expected to take swift action on the measure and the bishops urged people to oppose the legislation and support constitutionally-protected conscience rights by calling the governor's office at (360) 902-4111 to urge his veto of Senate Bill 6219.

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