



**Written Testimony of Mr. Jason Adkins, Esq.
MCC Executive Director & General Counsel**

House Health & Human Services Reform Committee

March 2, 2017

Chair Schomacker and Members of the Committee:

The Minnesota Catholic Conference (MCC), the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Minnesota, supports both of the abortion-related bills being heard by the committee today. MCC believes that these measures are an important opportunity for pro-life and pro-choice advocates to come together and find common ground on legislation that 1) protects the lives and health of women; and 2) honors the conscientious objection to abortion espoused by many Minnesotans. It is hoped that proponents of legal abortion will be willing to embrace the bills on their merits with the goal of protecting women, taxpayers, and innocent children. Please pass these bills.

H.F. 812 (Kiel) Abortion Clinic Licensing¹

New stories of the endangerment of women's health by abortion providers seem to be appearing more frequently, highlighted in a most tragic way by the case of Kermit Gosnell in Pennsylvania. Abortion clinics, like other outpatient clinics, should be subject to basic, common-sense regulations. In fact, the abortion industry (National Abortion Federation) itself prescribes a list of best practices that, as of yet, do not apply by law to clinics in Minnesota.² Strangely, beauty salons and tattoo parlors are subject to more regulation and inspection than abortion clinics. Regardless of one's view on the morality of abortion, protecting women from unsafe and unclean facilities should be a goal that we all share. The fact that four out of five of the abortion providers in Minnesota claim that adhering to these very basic regulations will cause them to shutter is a strong indicator that existing clinics are not much different from the supposed "back-alley" providers to which they claim women would be subject if they were to close.

H.F. 809 (Franson) Ban on Taxpayer Funding of Abortion

It is well known that abortion is a hotly contested issue in American public life, with strong feelings on both sides of the issue. Ending taxpayer-funded abortions is a way of honoring the views of all Minnesotans, and not privileging one viewpoint in the abortion debate over another. Though there are those who support legal abortion, others vehemently disagree for a multitude of reasons, including as a matter of conscience that it is wrong to kill innocent human life. Women are able to choose to terminate their pregnancies, but others should not have to fund them to do so, especially when there is such a high demand to adopt infants. Furthermore, if we want to assist women in need in unplanned pregnancies, we should address the factors that sometimes cause them to choose abortion, such as lack of financial resources to either bring a child to term or care for one. For example, families on MFIP continue to fall behind because the cash grant has not increased since 1986, and is not indexed for inflation. Thank you for your consideration.

¹ It is MCC's considered judgment that the proposed legislation is sufficiently distinct from the Texas regulatory framework struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Hellerstedt* to warrant passage by the Legislature.

² http://prochoice.org/wp-content/uploads/2015_NAF_CPGs.pdf