



To: LEGISLATURE'S JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
From: Marion Miner, Associate Director for Pro-Life & Family
Date: January 23, 2019

Good afternoon, Chairman Lathrop and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Marion Miner (M-A-R-I-O-N; M-I-N-E-R) and I am here on behalf of the Nebraska Catholic Conference, which advocates for the public policy priorities of the Catholic Church and advances the Gospel of Life through engaging, educating, and empowering public officials, the Catholic faithful, and the general public.

While LB 141, among other things, creates a unique offense for the crime of suffocation, which may be a worthwhile endeavor in its own right, our particular interest in this legislation is for something else it does that we think is worth highlighting and lending our support; namely, its provision for enhanced penalties where the victim is a pregnant woman.

Assaults on pregnant women are particularly heinous, as I think we all understand intuitively, for several reasons:

- 1) First, a woman who is pregnant is more vulnerable and less able to defend herself against an attacker than if she were not pregnant, and for that reason she deserves special protection;
- 2) Second, and of equal importance, a woman who is pregnant is necessarily also carrying another human person inside of her – her pre-born child – and that child is in the most vulnerable state a human being can be. For that reason, the child also deserves special protection; and
- 3) Finally, the law should and does provide for greater protections for the vulnerable in our society and for more severe penalties for those who attack them. That is true in many areas of the law, including, among others, our existing homicide of an unborn child statutes (Neb. Rev. Stat. § 28-388 *et seq.*) and assault against an unborn child statutes (Neb. Rev. Stat. § 28-395 *et seq.*).

We have many good laws in our state which afford special protection to those who are vulnerable. Because a pregnant woman and her pre-born child deserve special recognition and special protection under the law, the Nebraska Catholic Conference supports LB 141 and urges this committee to advance the bill to General File for consideration by the full Legislature.

Thank you for your time and attention.