



To: Judiciary Committee  
From: Marion Miner, Associate Director for Pro-Life & Family  
Nebraska Catholic Conference  
Subject: LB 690 (Healthy Pregnancies for Incarcerated Women Act) (Support)  
Date: March 6, 2019

Chairman Lathrop and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

The Nebraska Catholic Conference advocates for the public policy interests of the Catholic Church and advances the Gospel of Life by engaging, educating, and empowering public officials, Catholic laity, and the general public. I am here today to express the Conference's support for LB 690.

LB 690 would forbid the use of restraints by a Nebraska state prison, county or city jail, or other detention facility on a prisoner known to be pregnant, while in labor and delivery, and during post-partum recovery. It would also provide that no detention facility employee would be present in the room during labor and childbirth unless requested by medical personnel. It does make sensible exceptions to the restraint prohibition for situations where the prisoner is a substantial flight risk or where restraints are necessary to protect the safety of the pregnant woman or other prisoners.

It is the Conference's understanding that Nebraska's Department of Corrections already abides by these standards and does not put restraints on pregnant women. LB 690 would simply codify this good practice, which is consistent with what we believe to be in the best interest of incarcerated mothers, whose dignity and worth remain inviolate despite their crimes, and in the best interest of their unborn children, who are innocent.

Where we can take steps to prevent injuries to pregnant women and their unborn children without risking public safety, we should do so. Where we can avoid the humiliation inevitably endured by a woman who gives birth to a child while in handcuffs or other restraints and in the presence of prison guards, we should do so.

Since LB 690 advances laudable goals for the protection of vulnerable life and respect for the dignity of mothers with little or no additional risk to public safety, we encourage you to advance the bill to General File. Thank you for your consideration.