

TO: Health & Human Services Committee
FROM: Marion Miner, Associate Director of Pro-Life & Family Policy
Nebraska Catholic Conference
DATE: February 8, 2023
RE: LB574 (Let Them Grow Act) (Support)

The Nebraska Catholic Conference advocates for the public policy interests of the Catholic Church and advances the Gospel of Life through engaging, educating, and empowering public officials, Catholic laity, and the general public. I am here to express support for LB574 on behalf of the Conference.

As theories of sex and gender inconsistent with nature and the natural moral law are increasingly prevalent in popular culture, it is essential for the law to protect children while they develop and mature physiologically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Opponents of LB574 will argue that they wish to affirm the equal dignity of and society's respect for persons who feel a sense of incongruence between their biological sex and the gender with which they identify, which is often accompanied by feelings of anxiety and of being unaccepted. Love, compassion, and respect for such persons, who are our brothers and sisters, along with an affirmation of their equal dignity and worth, is due to them. With this affirmation we fully agree.

Pope Francis has spoken with feeling on this issue on several occasions. Speaking on what he has called "the ideology of gender,"¹ he reminds us that "[i]t is one thing to be understanding of human weakness and the complexities of life, and another to accept ideologies that attempt to sunder what are inseparable aspects of reality."² Elsewhere he describes this gender ideology as "an expression [by the contemporary world] of frustration and resignation, which seeks to cancel out sexual difference because it no longer knows how to confront it."³

Sex is a bodily and biological reality, and whether we receive it and respect it matters. Gender is how we give social expression to that reality.

A healthy culture promotes the integrity of persons, in part by cultivating manifestations of sex differences that correspond with biological realities. It supports gender expressions that reveal and communicate the reality of our sexual natures. A misguided concept of gender, on the other hand, denies, conceals, and distorts the realities of our nature and hinders human flourishing. Most alarmingly, it exposes emotionally vulnerable children to dangerous and sometimes irreversible wounding of their own bodies, permanently engaging in battle against what will be the body's lifelong struggle to heal itself.

¹ Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, 19 March 2016, 56.

² *Ibid.*

³ Francis, General Audience on Man and Woman, 15 April 2015.

What LB574 refers to as “gender altering procedures” are not treatments of any pathology. They suppress normal and healthy bodily development, interfere with the normal and healthy functioning of the human body, and alter or remove healthy organs and tissues. The acts themselves harm the body and heal nothing.

Violations of the principles of medical ethics have become more tolerated in recent years. They should not be tolerated when it comes to children, especially when the consequences can be permanent. We urge the committee to advance LB574.

Thank you for your time and consideration.