



## Catholics for Choice Testimony in support of WHPA

The Honorable Richard Blumenthal  
706 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

June 16, 2021

The Honorable Ted Cruz  
127A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Blumenthal and Ranking Member Cruz:

Catholics for Choice writes in strong support the Women's Health Protection Act of 2021 (S.1975). As Catholics, we trust people to make their own personal family planning decisions and know that protecting safe, legal access to abortion is a moral imperative, rooted in our deeply-held belief in every individual's moral agency and religious liberty for all.

The overwhelming majority of Catholics in the United States are pro-choice and support access to comprehensive reproductive health services, including abortion, because of their faith, not in spite of it. The Women's Health Protection Act would help safeguard access to high-quality care and secure constitutional rights, ensuring each person's freedom to make decisions about abortion according to their own conscience, without political interference. The bill would also protect the rights of individual healthcare providers to administer quality care, without burdensome restrictions that are designed to impede access rather than improve people's health outcomes.

As Catholics, we are called by our faith to follow our consciences in all matters of moral decision-making and to respect others' right to do the same. We regard conscience as both a gift and a responsibility and maintain that we must use all of the resources available to us to form our consciences, so that we can make the best possible decisions for ourselves – especially in morally complex circumstances. We believe this is particularly essential when making choices regarding sexual and reproductive health. When a person exercises their moral agency to seek abortion services, they should be met with affordable, accessible, and compassionate care.

For decades, ultraconservative state policymakers have been working overtime, at the bidding of allies like the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), to destroy access to abortion, state by state and law by law. Despite what the USCCB would like legislators to believe, the vast majority of Catholics in the United States support access to reproductive healthcare services for those who need them. Six in 10 Catholic voters believe abortion can be a moral choice, and a majority of Catholic voters support access to insurance coverage for abortion—whether through private or government-run plans.



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Our Catholic faith charges us to respect the separation of church and state and value religious pluralism. The proper role of government in this country is not to privilege one set of religious views over others, but rather to preserve religious freedom —an expansive rather than restrictive idea, encompassing both freedom *of* and freedom *from* religion. True religious freedom protects the right of each person to follow their own conscience, moral code, or belief system in making critical and deeply personal family planning decisions.

The Women’s Health Protection Act is a vitally important bill, rooted in compassion, that protects abortion access at the federal level and protects every American’s conscience. The fight for universal access to the full range of healthcare coverage that Americans need and deserve – including reproductive healthcare information and services – is more important than ever, and the only way to ensure that people all around the United States can obtain it is to protect this right on the federal level. WHPA would secure and uphold our constitutional rights by protecting abortion patients and providers from political or religious interference.

Catholics for Choice remains steadfast in our mission to protect every individual’s right to make their own conscience-based decisions and calls upon Congress to pass the Women’s Health Protection Act (WHPA), ensuring access to reproductive healthcare for all who need it no matter their insurance status, their income level, or their zip code. It is the right thing to do.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. L. Manson". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

Jamie L. Manson

President