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**Statement
of
Bishop Liam Cary**

AGAINST HOUSE BILL 2002

I write to oppose, and I urge others to oppose, House Bill 2002, currently before the Oregon Senate. HB 2002 bundles the highly divisive issues of abortion and transgenderism into a blunt legal instrument that significantly promotes their expansion by authority of the State of Oregon.

HB 2002 would expand access to clinical and chemical abortion by funding mobile abortion clinics in rural areas and by compelling pharmacists and insurance companies to dispense abortion pills everywhere. In a similar spirit, the proposed law confers wholehearted official approval on pharmaceutical and surgical interventions for gender transition just as nations that formerly approved them severely limit their availability.

Against HB 2002's legislative one-two punch a torrent of objections has flowed into Salem. With this statement I wish to add a protest against the bill's profound disrespect for the authority God gives parents over their children. "Hear . . . your father's instruction, and reject not your mother's teaching," Proverbs directs us (1:8). "Honor your father and your mother," Jesus commands us (Matthew 15:4); and what He enjoins He exemplifies: found by His parents in the Temple, the twelve-year-old Jesus went home with them to Nazareth "and was obedient to them" (Luke 3:51).

In striking contrast, HB 2002 effectively dismisses parents from the scene of adolescent crisis, absolving them of responsibility over the children they generate and outsourcing their authority to delegates of the State (counselors, therapists, doctors). The proposed law notably reinforces existing legislation that prevents mothers and fathers from guiding life-shaping decisions their children agonize over, most notably by abolishing age-of-consent eligibility for abortion. No longer would a girl need to be 15 and have the written

consent of her parents to qualify for this serious surgery; HB 2002 does away with age limits altogether. A girl could apply to Planned Parenthood at any age, and she could do so without her parents' knowledge and without their consent. Under HB 2002 neither mother nor father merit so much as notification of her decision unless she submits a request in writing that they be informed. The all-competent State will know of their daughter's abortion; her parents will not.

So will it be with their child's gender transition under the proposed legislation. Current law allows 15-year-old teenagers to obtain gender-affirming care on demand, with no prior parental consent or notification required and no subsequent parental objection permitted. Bad enough, but HB 2002 goes even further. To keep parents at a distance and further facilitate their children's access to hormonal transformation and surgical mutilation, HB 2002 mandates insurance coverage in accord with international Standards of Care that have eliminated all age minimums for transitional drugs and surgeries. "As long as a therapist is willing to write a letter of support for a procedure and a doctor is willing to perform it," Leor Sapir observes, "Oregon law will mandate the procedure for coverage by private insurance and government-funded Medicaid." Of the details of these life-altering transactions, parents will be kept in the dark.

House Bill 2002 employs the State of Oregon's taxing and regulatory powers to coerce Oregonians to support practices deeply offensive to their conscience. HB 2002 does not merit passage into law.



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