



Statement by Bishop Burbidge and Bishop Knestout on Virginia House of Delegates Passage of Abortion Expansion Legislation

January 26, 2021

Bishop Michael F. Burbidge of the Diocese of Arlington and Bishop Barry C. Knestout of the Diocese of Richmond issued the following statement on today's Virginia House of Delegates passage of abortion expansion legislation:

“Today, the House of Delegates made the tragic decision to expand drastically abortion coverage in Virginia’s health benefits exchange. This legislation is identical to the bill the [Senate passed](#) that permits plans participating in the exchange to cover abortion for any reason, funded in significant part with Virginians’ tax dollars. Taxes pay for managing the exchange, and for subsidizing health plans of tens of thousands of low- and middle-income Virginians using the exchange to provide healthcare for themselves and their families.

Replacing the current life-saving restrictions on abortion with a policy of abortion coverage without limits in our state exchange is drastic, dangerous and will result in the tragic end to more unborn lives. Though this bill has passed, advocacy against future threats to life and dignity is essential. Therefore, we encourage all to continue in the active participation of the faithful in our two dioceses in this advocacy. If you have not already done so, please visit vacatholic.org to join our Conference’s email network to receive critical alerts and updates.

As the U.S. bishops’ [Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship](#) statement highlights, ‘The obligation to participate in political life is rooted in our baptismal commitment to follow Jesus Christ and to bear Christian witness in all we do’ (no. 13). Every day, without discouragement, may we each continue to advocate with relentless determination for life and dignity. Our baptism calls us to do no less.”

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