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Statement on Advisory Referendum Assisted Reproductive Technology

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What does an Advisory Referendum mean?

An advisory referendum on a ballot does not change the law. It merely polls the opinion of Illinois voters on a subject.

What does the Advisory Referendum on Assisted Reproductive Treatments say?

"Should all medically appropriate assisted reproductive treatments, including, but not limited to, in vitro fertilization (IVF), be covered by any health insurance plan in Illinois that provides coverage for pregnancy benefits, without limitation on the number of treatments?"

What is Assisted Reproductive Treatments?

As defined by the federal Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) includes all fertility treatments in which either eggs or embryos are handled. Most ART procedures involve surgically removing eggs from a woman's ovaries, combining them with sperm in the laboratory, and returning them to the woman's body.

Why is the Catholic Conference of Illinois opposed to the Advisory Referendum?

Many couples struggle with infertility. The Catholic Church walks with them and supports them in their journey to bring new life into the world. All life is created in the image and likeness of God and therefore is good. We respect the dignity of all human life.

However, the path of choosing IVF cannot be supported because a good end does not justify unacceptable means. In vitro fertilization replaces the intimate act of procreation between a man and a woman in marriage, with an act that puts a medical professional in control of the creation and selection of which embryos ultimately will be given the potential to live or die. Those embryos not chosen for implantation are either frozen, used for experimentation, or terminated. IVF also opens the door to surrogacy and donation of eggs and sperm, further removing the gift of procreation from the marital act.

The wording of this referendum could also be interpreted to cover procedures such as gene editing and human cloning.

In addition, the language of this advisory referendum provides no protection for many religious and secular employers who have moral or religious objections to including such procedures in insurance coverage.

For more information, please visit the following resources: United State Conference of Catholic Bishops:

<https://www.usccb.org/prolife/reproductive-technology> and
https://www.usccb.org/resources/IVF_Human_Cost_2024.pdf