

FLORIDA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

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MICHAEL B. SHEEDY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



March 12, 2015

The Honorable Cary Pigman
Chairman, House Health Quality Subcommittee
214 House Office Building
402 S. Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

Re: Support HB 633 (Sullivan) to Revise Voluntary and Informed Patient Consent

Dear Chairman Pigman:

Thank you and the Health Quality Committee for considering HB 633 (Sullivan). A great deal of vital information is currently provided to Florida women only immediately prior to terminating their pregnancies.

Reflection Periods in State Law – Other States Incorporate Them; Florida Needs One
Twenty-six (26) states have provided reflection periods prior to abortions, including Florida's neighboring states of Georgia and Alabama. Florida does not, however; and HB 633 addresses that shortcoming in state law by adding a 24-hour reflection period.

Waiting Periods for Other Significant Events

There is similar precedent in law for other weighty matters for residents of our state. Consider the waiting periods prior to marriage (three days), dissolution of marriage (20 days), purchase of a handgun (three days), and cremation (48 hours).

United States Supreme Court Precedent

The U.S. Supreme Court, in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* held that a reflection period prior to an abortion, "helps ensure that a woman's decision to abort is a well-considered one and rationally furthers the State's legitimate interest in maternal health and in unborn life" (*Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pa. v. Casey* 505 U.S. 833 (1992)). HB 633 furthers this interest.

While we oppose abortion, the short period of time provided in HB 633 empowers women to make better informed decisions. It provides time to confer with family and consider aspects of faith before irreversibly terminating her pregnancy. We urge your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael B. Sheedy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael B. Sheedy

cc: The Hon. Jennifer Sullivan, Florida House of Representatives
Members of the House Health Quality Subcommittee
Ingrid Delgado, Associate for Social Concerns/Respect Life, FCCB