

## Colorado Bishops' Statement on HB26-1309 Abuse in Cases of Separation

We, the Catholic Bishops of Colorado, are deeply concerned about several pieces of legislation introduced in the 75<sup>th</sup> Colorado General Assembly. One very concerning bill is HB26-1309 Abuse in Cases of Separation, which is intended to protect spouses and children from domestic abuse, but instead goes beyond that scope to undermine parental rights and devalue the sanctity of life of preborn children and their mothers.

HB26-1309 offers a broad definition of “coercive control” in domestic violence cases to include a parent who does not affirm their child’s professed “trans identity.” Parents who attempt to offer compassionate care for their children suffering from gender dysphoria could have their parental custody rights revoked under HB26-1309, and their children removed from their homes. Two similar bills attempted to do this in the last year and were forced to amend following the public outcry of hundreds of Coloradans in the Capitol.

According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, “The political community has a duty to honor the family, to assist it, and to ensure especially: the freedom to establish a family, have children, and bring them up in keeping with the family’s own moral and religious convictions and the freedom to profess one’s faith, to hand it on, and raise one’s children in it, with the necessary means and institutions” (CCC 2211). It is the natural right of parents, as the primordial and inalienable authority in the family, to ensure their children are protected (CCC 2221).

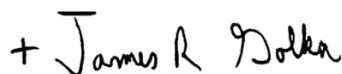
It is concerning and unjust whenever government policy is to remove children from their families, not for abuse or neglect, but because of the parents’ well-founded beliefs on human sexuality.

Additionally, HB26-1309 redefines health-related abuse to include a male partner advocating for the life of his preborn child if he opposes the mother’s decision to abort their child. Human life is sacred from conception to natural death. This is a truth affirmed throughout Catholic Social Teaching. The *Catechism* states, “direct abortion is gravely contrary to the moral law” (CCC 2271). Men share in the duty to protect preborn children from conception and also share in the responsibility of abortion as either protectors of life or accomplices in the “grave offense” of abortion (CCC 2272). HB26-1309 disregards the role of the father in the preborn child’s life.

Catholic Church teaching is clear on the problems within HB26-1309, which, if enacted, would detrimentally hurt society, and especially the family, which the law was intended to protect.

**We ask faithful and all concerned Coloradans to contact their Senators in these last days of the legislative session to vote “no” on HB26-1309.** You may do so with this action alert here: <https://www.cocatholic.org/take-action/action-alerts>.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



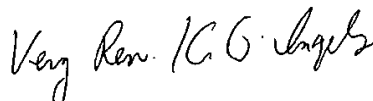
**Most Reverend James R. Golka**  
*Archbishop of Denver*



**Most Reverend Stephen J. Berg**  
*Bishop of Pueblo*



**Most Reverend Jorge H. Rodriguez**  
*Auxiliary Bishop of Denver*



**Very Reverend Kyle T. Ingels**  
*Diocesan Administrator of Colorado Springs*



**Most Reverend Samuel J. Aquila**  
*Archbishop-emeritus of Denver*