Bioethics Public Policy Report  
June 17, 2022

National

- On June 7th, the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) issued an updated National Terrorism Advisory System Bulletin where it warned of a “heightened threat environment” over the coming months. Without mentioning the Dobbs decision by name, the bulletin stated that DHS “expect[s] the threat environment to become more dynamic as several high-profile events could be exploited to justify acts of violence against a range of possible targets.” Without mentioning Jane’ Revenge by name, DHS added that, “threat actors have recently mobilized to violence due to factors such as personal grievances, reactions to current events, and adherence to violent extremist ideologies.” The full text of the bulletin is available here.

- On June 14th, the organization calling itself Jane’s Revenge issued a communiqué declaring “open season” on pro-life organizations and groups. The communiqué states, in part: “We are versatile, we are mercurial, and we answer to no one but ourselves … From here forward, any anti-choice group who closes their doors, and stops operating will no longer be a target. But until you do, it’s open season, and we know where your operations are. The infrastructure of the enslavers will not survive. We will never stop, back down, slow down, or retreat.” More than one hundred Republican members of the US House of Representatives sent a letter to Attorney General Merrick Garland calling on the Department of Justice to investigate the attacks on, and vandalism against, pro-life supporters and organizations.

- According to the pro-abortion Guttmacher Institute, the number of abortions in the US increased eight percent from 2017 to 2020. In 2017 there were 862,320 abortions performed. In 2020 the number was 930,160. In addition, the abortion ratio (the number of abortions per one hundred pregnancies) increased from 18.4 percent in 2017 to 20.6 percent in 2020. In 2020, one in five pregnancies ended in abortion.

- The Biden administration is being sued for removing insurance coverage for fertility awareness-based methods (FABM) of family planning. Since 2016 the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) included FABM under “preventive care and screenings,” but Biden’s Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) removed it in December of 2021. The lawsuit was filed by Alliance Defending Freedom on behalf of Catholic practitioner Cami Jo Tice-Harouff and her patients. Tice-Harouff is a member of the Catholic Medical Association (CMA), which — along with the NCBC and the US Conference of Catholic Bishops — issued a public comment recommending that FABM instruction continue to be provided and covered.

- As of June 12th, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is no longer requiring that international airline passengers traveling to the US show a negative COVID-19 test result before boarding their flight. Reasons for the change in policy include “the widespread uptake of highly effective COVID-19 vaccines, the availability of effective therapeutics, and the accrual of high rates of vaccine- and infection-
induced immunity at the population level in the United States.” While the CDC no longer requires testing, it still recommends it.

- Gender advocates argue that children need access to so-called affirmative care (i.e., “transitioning”) in order to prevent suicide. A new report from The Heritage Foundation titled “Puberty Blockers, Cross-Sex Hormones, and Youth Suicide” questions this claim. The report states that since 2010 when puberty blocking and cross-sex hormones became widely available, suicide rates for people between ages twelve and twenty-three have increased in states that have adopted policies allowing children to access these medications without parental consent. Click here for further information.

- Joe Biden has signed an executive order directing the Department of Health and Human Services to, among other things, “protect” people who claim to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender-queer, intersex, etc. from so-called conversion therapy. The order is likely a response to the efforts of states like Florida which recently banned Medicaid coverage of so-called gender reassignment for children. The order also directs the Department of Education to establish a working group to “address discrimination” against students who experience same-sex attraction or with their gender identity issues. Among other tasks, the working group will “review, revise, develop, and promote guidance, technical assistance, training, promising practices, and sample policies for States, school districts, and other educational institutions to promote safe and inclusive learning environments.” Click here for more information.

State by State

- The Florida Agency for Health Care Administration has issued Generally Accepted Professional Medical Standards Determination on the Treatment of Gender Dysphoria, a forty-five-page document that is highly critical of the “affirmative care” model for addressing gender identity disorder. The abstract is noteworthy: “Available medical literature provides insufficient evidence that sex reassignment through medical intervention is a safe and effective treatment for gender dysphoria. Studies presenting the benefits to mental health, including those claiming that the services prevent suicide, are either low or very low quality and rely on unreliable methods such as surveys and retrospective analyses, both of which are cross-sectional and highly biased. Rather, the available evidence demonstrates that these treatments cause irreversible physical changes and side effects that can affect long-term health.” The abstract concluded by stating, “Five clinical and technical expert assessments attached to this report recommend against the use of such interventions to treat what is categorized as a mental health disorder.”

- Florida Surgeon General Joseph A. Ladapo, MD, PhD has written to the Florida Board of Medicine asking it to rethink any support for so-called gender transitioning, especially for children. Ladapo stated, in part: “The current standards set by numerous professional organizations appear to follow a preferred political ideology instead of the highest level of generally accepted medical science. Florida must do more to protect children from politics-based medicine. Otherwise, children and adolescents in our state will continue to face a substantial risk of long-term harm.” The full letter is available here.

- On January 1, 2021, California’s “Transgender Respect, Agency, and Dignity Act” took effect. As of May 23, 2022, 342 male prison inmates who perceive themselves as female
had requested transfer from a men’s prison to a women’s prison. Thirty-nine of these requests were approved. The state’s actions have led to allegations of rape and to at least one lawsuit.

Federal Courts

- US District Judge Marc Treadwell (Middle District of Georgia) has ruled that Houston County, a public employer, violated federal law by excluding so-called gender-transitioning medical interventions for a man who perceives himself to be a woman. Specifically, the plaintiff was denied a vaginoplasty. Treadwell maintained the employer’s exclusion “plainly discriminates because of transgender status” and as a result violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Federal agencies and courts in recent years have redefined “discrimination on the basis of sex” to include perceived gender identity and same-sex attraction.

Catholic Resources

- On June 6th, the Colorado Catholic bishops released Open Letter to Catholic Politicians and the Faithful on Worthily Recieving Communion. The letter—signed by Archbishop Samuel Aquila (Denver), Bishop Stephen Berg (Pueblo), Bishop James Golka (Colorado Springs) and Auxiliary Bishop Jorge Rodriguez (Denver)—maintained that Catholic politicians in the state who voted for the so-called Reproductive Health and Equity Act (RHEA) should refrain from receiving the Eucharist. The letter states, in part: “We have a strong desire to discuss the spiritual and cultural impact of laws like RHEA with politicians of both parties who say they are Catholic and who represent people in our state. As their shepherds we want to ensure that they understand the Church’s teaching on receiving Holy Communion and the proper spiritual disposition for doing so. Efforts have already been made to speak with several of these lawmakers, but unfortunately, very few of them have accepted the invitation to meet ... Until public repentance takes place and sacramental absolution is received in Confession, we ask that those Catholic legislators who live or worship in Colorado and who have voted for RHEA, to voluntarily refrain from receiving Holy Communion.” The bishops’ full letter is available here.

- Bishop Michael Burbidge (Arlington VA) is calling on Joe Biden to repent of his support of abortion and the scandal it has caused in the Catholic Church. On his podcast, Walk Humbly, Burbidge stated: “I find it very troubling that President Biden continues to contradict the most basic teachings of the faith he professes ...It's a shame. It really is, both for the state, for his own soul, and also because he's missing the opportunity to do good in his role that is unmatched, the ability he has to do good. And it's so sad to see him not doing that. Imagine if he chose to support women in need rather than encourage wider access to abortion.” Burbidge also urged Biden to take time in Eucharistic adoration and hear what the voice of God is telling him.

- In a June 10th address to Directors of the Federation of Catholic Family Association in Europe, Pope Francis spoke on the importance of marriage between a man and a woman. He stated, in part: “The mutual love between man and woman is a reflection of the absolute and unfalling love with which God loves the human being, destined to be fruitful and to find fulfilment in the common work of the social order and the care of creation. The family founded on marriage is therefore crucial. It is the primary cell of our communities and must be recognized as such, in its unique and indispensable
regenerative function. Not because it is an ideal and perfect entity, and not because it is an ideological model, but because it represents the natural place of our first relationships and of regeneration.” Francis also used his message to critique the practice of gestational surrogacy stating, “[t]he dignity of men and women is also threatened by the inhuman and increasingly widespread practice of the ‘rented uterus’ in which women, almost always poor women, are exploited and children treated as commodities.”

**Latest “Bioethics on Air” Podcast**

- **Episode 94: Federal Intrusion in the US Health Care Sector and Why It’s Not Working** — Grace-Marie Turner, President of the Galen Institute, explains both the history and the many challenges facing the US health care sector, focusing on the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare). She also discusses the impact of implementing a single-payer system, or “Medicare for All,” in the United States.

**Of Note**

- “Voting for RHEA was participating in a gravely sinful action because it facilitates the killing of innocent unborn babies, and those Catholic politicians who have done so have very likely placed themselves outside of the communion of the Church.” — [Colorado Catholic Bishops](http://www.ncbcenter.org/) on Catholic politicians who voted for the state’s so-called Reproductive Health Equity Act.
- “Pride Parades and the Pride festivals that follow are noisy and crowded. They're filled with sights that may be new to kids, like public nudity and kink. Not to mention that Pride parades aren’t the most sober of places. So is it appropriate to take your young kids to Pride? Considering the benefits for all families ... the answer is absolutely.” — Opening lines from the article “Should You Take Your Kids to a [so-called] Pride Parade?”
- “Pride is back in the White House.” — [Joe Biden](http://www.ncbcenter.org/)

**Sharing the News:** If you have public policy news that you would like to share with the NCBC, or if you have colleagues who would like to receive the Bioethics Public Policy Report, please contact Joe Zalot at 215-871-2014 or jzalot@ncbcenter.org. Previous editions of this report are available through the [Public Policy](http://www.ncbcenter.org/) page of the NCBC website.

**Sharing the Resources:** If you enjoy receiving the Bioethics Public Policy Report and would like to support its continued publication, please consider making a [donation](http://www.ncbcenter.org/) to the NCBC.

The National Catholic Bioethics Center webpage, available at [http://www.ncbcenter.org/](http://www.ncbcenter.org/), is a significant resource for bioethics information. NCBC bioethicists are also on-call for consultation twenty-four hours a day, seven days per week, at 215-877-2660.