



March 31, 2026

The Honorable Mia Bonta, Chair  
Assembly Health Committee  
1021 O Street, Room 100  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 2531 (Irwin) Public health: abortion services - OPPOSE**

Dear Chair Bonta and Honorable Members of the Assembly Health Committee,

The California Catholic Conference **opposes AB 2531 (Irwin)** as amended 3/16/26. This bill requires Medi-Cal providers to apply for grants to cover abortion for veterans and offer abortion information on the VA website to veterans.

We are always opposed to the violence of abortion. However, reducing the healthcare needs of women veterans to abortion at the expense of every other kind of reproductive healthcare will only worsen gender biases and the outcomes for women's and maternal health. Comprehensive reproductive and sexual health understands the totality of the person, including the physiological, nutritional, endocrine, cardiovascular, and psychological needs of women across the lifespan. Use these funds to address the healthcare shortage by incentivizing solutions to OBGYN training, lowering c-section rates, maternal mortality, increasing prenatal care options, or addressing social determinants of health.

Abortion is already free and ubiquitous in California - performed by doctors, nurse practitioners, midwives, and physician assistants, at 400 facilities, on college campuses, and via telehealth and a dozen sources by mail. Pushing unwanted abortion on our veteran communities is exploitative and is reproductive coercion.

What women in maternity care deserts and HRSA's cannot find are enough doctors who can safely monitor them through pregnancy and deliver their infants.


- [1 in 4](#) California women receives inadequate prenatal care.
- 46 maternity wards have [closed since 2012](#), half in the last three years.
- Doctors are assisting at [hundreds of births](#) per year.
- The [average OBGYN age](#) is 51, with most retiring by 59.
- Rural California counties [have no OBGYN](#).
- Maternal mortality has [doubled in California](#), with astonishingly high rates for Black and Native mothers.

All this has occurred while abortion has expanded across the state. California is failing at reproductive healthcare that women need, and lawmakers need to ensure parity for the choices of pregnant and parenting women as they pursue motherhood. These pregnancy needs ought not be ignored.

The California Catholic community is 12 million strong, and we are the largest private nonprofit provider of healthcare, education, and social services for the common good in our state. The Conference advocates for the dignity of every human person and policies that help cultivate strong, healthy families.

For these reasons, as the official public policy voice for the Catholic Church of California, we request that you vote **"no"** on **AB 2531**. Should you have any questions regarding our position please contact Molly Sheahan, Associate Director for Healthy Families at 916.313.4019 or [msheahan@cacatholic.org](mailto:msheahan@cacatholic.org).

Sincerely,

  
Kathleen Buckley Domingo  
Executive Director