



Michigan Report

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CATHOLIC CONFERENCE WARNS OF 'FAMILY CAP' EFFECT ON ABORTION

Research has shown that placing caps on welfare assistance for growing families leads to an increased number of women seeking abortions, which is why the Michigan Catholic Conference is urging lawmakers not to pursue a "family cap" option.

Gongwer News Service first reported the House Appropriations Human Services Subcommittee is studying what states place a cap on assistance to those on welfare regardless if families increase in size. Currently, Michigan provides assistance to needy families based on group size, so if a family has another child while on state aid they receive more money.

A Rutgers University study of New Jersey's family cap showed it contributed to a decline in birth rates among welfare recipients and also a temporary increase in abortions, according to a New York Times article provided to Gongwer by the Catholic Conference.

There are 19 states with some sort of family cap in place, of which 10 have higher abortion rates in general than Michigan, according to a review of 2006 data available by the Kaiser Family Foundation.

Michigan's abortion rate at that time was 12 per 1,000 women, although abortions have been on the decline in the state since then.

[Rep. David Agema](#) (R-Grandville), chair of the Department of Human Services budget, said Wednesday he was not aware of the potential effect family caps have on abortion rates until the Catholic Conference brought it to his attention.

Mr. Agema is anti-abortion and said he doesn't want to pursue any policy that would increase abortions. However he also said from a budget standpoint he wants to make sure the state isn't providing a financial incentive for people on welfare to continue having babies.

The subcommittee will review how much state aid in general is available to low-income families at a future hearing, he said.

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