

April, 2023

After Easter recess, the Illinois General Assembly will resume its 2023 regular session. Several pending bills are of particular interest and importance:

SB 1909 passed the Senate at the end of March and went to the House. This bill would make it difficult if not impossible for pregnancy resource centers to operate. Without defining “deceptive acts or practices,” it would subject such centers to civil liability for engaging in such practices. Also, it provides for similar civil liability for sidewalk counselors who stand outside abortion clinics. This bill, which seems to have strong backing from the state Attorney General, would allow the Attorney General to investigate pregnancy resource centers even in the absence of a particular complaint.

This past winter, an identical House bill was not called for a hearing before the appropriate committee when witness slips filed in opposition to the bill greatly outnumbered those filed in support of it. A similar disproportion of opposing witness slips was received by the Senate committee, but the Senate passed the bill nonetheless. This bill will go before the full House after Easter recess.

HB 999 creates women’s health clinics across the state, providing birth control services that could include abortions. As of Easter recess, this bill was in the House Health and Human Services Committee.

HB 1286 would allow for “all gender” restrooms at stadiums, concert halls, and similar facilities, including those operated by park districts. Also included would be venues for professional sports. If facilities are being remodeled, “all gender” restrooms would have to be included. This bill does not affect schools and churches, but it seems to be part of an incremental approach to making increasing numbers of restroom facilities “all gender” throughout the state. This bill was barely adopted by the House in March and has been passed to the Senate.

HB 1591 would repeal sections of current state law designed to prevent visitors to Illinois from contracting marriages that would be null and void in their place of residence. This has likely been introduced against the possibility that the U.S. Supreme Court *Obergefell v. Hodges* decision is overturned in the future. If that were to occur, Illinois could become a destination for same-sex couples wanting to marry. This bill was adopted by the House, and has been passed to the Senate.

HB 2350 removes words such as *male* and *female* from parts of the insurance code that have to do with prostate screening and pap smear tests. The House adopted this bill and passed it on to the Senate.

HB 3157 requires each public school board to provide LGBTQIA+ diversity training for teachers who have not received it. This bill was re-referred to the House Rules committee shortly before Easter recess.

SB 1907 requires, among other things, all public institutions of higher education (universities and community colleges) to provide “emergency contraception” at reduced prices in at least one vending machine (or “wellness kiosk”) on campus that is accessible all day every day. Last year a similar bill did not pass the Senate, but the present bill was adopted there on March 30. It has been passed over to the House.

HB 3158 has to do with “Natural Organic Reduction.” It provides for human composting, reducing human bodies after death to compost. This practice hardly recognizes the dignity of the human body and can lead even Christians to take the biblical teaching of the resurrection quite lightly. This bill was adopted by the House.