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Bishop Cary ***Statement on Measure 106***

This October, Respect Life Month offers Oregonians a timely opportunity to put our respect into practice politically by voting YES on Measure 106—Stop Taxpayer Funding for Abortion. This citizens' initiative is on the ballot because more than 10,000 volunteers—many of them Knights of Columbus—gathered more than 150,000 signatures to put it there.

Many of us may wonder why they did. Isn't the government forbidden to spend tax dollars for abortion? Well, yes and no. It depends what you mean by "government." The *federal* government is indeed impeded from funding elective abortions with tax monies. But *state* governments can decide for themselves. Well over half of them (32) have decided not to; they specifically prohibit taxes being used to finance abortion.

Among the minority of states that do publicly fund abortion, Oregon does so primarily through the Oregon Health Plan. Coverage in the Plan entitles a woman to an unlimited number of abortions for any reason at any stage of pregnancy at no cost to herself; taxpayers pick up the bill. That bill was significantly increased in 2017 when the legislature expanded eligibility for tax-supported abortion but blocked a vote by the public. Measure 106 would overturn the part of the bill that channeled public funds to abortion.

As things stand now, funding abortion in Oregon is not a pro-choice matter: You and I have no choice but to fund someone else's choice to undergo elective surgery that takes an innocent life. Since 2002 that choice has claimed the lives of more than 57,000 Oregonians—about ten every day.

Measure 106 will not bring those lives back, nor will it stay the hands of abortionists from claiming still more. But it *will* stop the State of Oregon from putting our tax dollars in their hands to prey upon the defenseless. That will be a step in the right direction, a step in the direction of justice.

I urge you to consider these things carefully and vote YES on Measure 106.