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Testimony in Support of Assembly Bill 216
Assembly Committee on Health
Julaine K. Appling, WFA President
May 29, 2013

Thank you, Chairman Severson and committee members, for the opportunity to testify today in support of Assembly Bill 216. I am Julaine Appling, president of Wisconsin Family Action, an organization dedicated to strengthening, preserving and promoting marriage, family, life and liberty in The Badger state. Our mission affords us the privilege of working extensively with churches and religiously-affiliated or faith-based organizations statewide.

We are very grateful for Rep. Jacque and Sen. Grothman's aggressive approach on this important matter of respecting the religious freedom and the pro-life position of many Wisconsin citizens and religious organizations.

This bill corrects two egregious wrongs. First, it rightly restores religious freedom and conscience protection as it relates to pro-life beliefs for churches and other faith-based not-for-profits organizations—protections that were removed at the state level in 2009 Wisconsin legislation and have been further trampled at the federal level by Health and Human Service mandates related to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Second, this bill keeps taxpayers from having to fund abortion-related activities for state employees who are insured through the Group Insurance Board. This bill reflects the very real truth that abortion and very often contraception are not health care. Abortion and contraception are also not rights. Taxpayers should not be forced to pay for them. In addition, religious beliefs and conscience issues should not be dismissed and trumped by these controversial issues.

To our way of thinking, this is a common-sense bill in light of the situation we are currently in at both the state and federal levels; and we urge you to support it and to recommend it to the full Assembly. Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.