

WHOM WE REPRESENT

Formed in 1969 by the Roman Catholic Bishops of Illinois, the Catholic Conference of Illinois (CCI) is the agent through which the six dioceses of Illinois (Belleville, Chicago, Joliet, Peoria, Rockford and Springfield) may act mutually and cooperatively in matters of interdiocesan and state-wide interest. CCI is the multi-issue public policy arm of the Catholic Church in Illinois.

THE ILLINOIS CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

- 991 parishes serving over 3.8 million Catholics
- 6 dioceses
- 1 Archbishop, 17 Bishops
- 2,681 priests, 3,427 sisters, 386 brothers and 1,208 deacons
- 424 elementary schools, 71 high schools and 12 colleges serving over 224,738 students annually
- 45 Catholic hospitals assisting 9.3 million individuals
- Over 100 Catholic organizations and services for the elderly and special needs populations, including independent and assisted housing, skilled and intermediate nursing facilities, home health and social service agencies
- Over 200 Catholic Charities programs serving more than one million families and individuals
- Over 100,000 people employed in Catholic schools, social service agencies, hospitals, nursing homes, cemeteries and diocesan administration offices

CATHOLICS FOR LIFE

- Support legislative efforts designed to reduce and eventually eliminate abortion, including but not limited to the Ultrasound Opportunity Act and a Women and Infant Supportive Healthcare (WISH) Act.
- Oppose legislation or other policy initiatives that undermine the sanctity of human life at any stage from conception to natural death, including but not limited to abortion, euthanasia, funding for embryonic stem cell research, human cloning and expanded access to RU-486.
- Defend and expand the Illinois Health Care Right of Conscience Act.
- Support abolition of the death penalty in Illinois.

DEFENSE OF MARRIAGE

- Support policies that promote marriage and strengthen the family and oppose policies that undermine marriage as a sacred union between one man and one woman.
- Seek better conscience protections for Church agencies in regards to Illinois' civil union law.

EDUCATION

- Advocate for the creation of an Individual/Corporate Tax Credit Scholarship Program and/or for the expansion of the Education Expense Tax Credit by raising the cap, increasing the percentage of qualified expenses and including refundability so that low-income families can benefit.
- Work to restore funding to the Textbook Loan, Educational Improvement and School Safety Block Grant and the Parent/Guardian Transportation Reimbursement programs.
- Maintain a smooth and cooperative relationship between the State Board of Education and Catholic schools to ensure an effective state recognition program for nonpublic schools.
- Pursue and support other school choice options – such as vouchers programs – as opportunities exist.

SOCIAL SERVICES

- Support partnerships with faith-based social service providers while protecting the right of religious conscience.
- Support initiatives that stabilize and enhance funding for critical social service agencies and foster parents.
- Advocate for adequate funding to cover the true costs of programs to serve the poor and vulnerable, for performance based contracts for services to children under the state's guardianship, and for foster parent reimbursement.
- Work collaboratively with state agencies to examine the adequacy and efficiency of services to needy seniors, families and children. Identify solutions and create strong partnerships to improve these services.
- Advocate for legislation to effectively address and reduce poverty, including funding and improvements to public assistance programs.

AD-HOC COMMITTEES

- Continue to monitor changes to the Cemetery Oversight Act and other legislation impacting the ministry of Catholic Cemeteries.
- Advocate for legislation and support policies that respect the dignity of immigrants who live and work in Illinois.
- Promote efforts to increase affordable housing for Illinois' low-income families and help these families maintain housing.
- Support efforts to protect the dignity of workers and promote justice in the workplace.
- Support initiatives for restorative justice as well as efforts to reduce recidivism among ex-offenders, such as literacy tutoring and job training.
- Support public policy and legislative initiatives to establish a spectrum of senior living situations, including assisted living and supportive living, and advocate for programs and initiatives that help seniors maintain independence in their communities as long as possible.

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

Guided by the principles of Catholic Social Teaching, the Catholic Conference of Illinois advocates for the issues contained in this brochure on behalf of Catholics in the state. Catholic Social Teaching includes the following major principles and values:

- **Life and Dignity of the Human Person**
 - Protection of Human Life and Rights and Meeting Corresponding Responsibilities
 - Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers
- **Attainment of the Common Good**
 - Universal Destination of Goods
 - Preferential Option for the Poor and Vulnerable
- **Subsidiarity**
 - Centrality and Protection of the Family
 - Participation in Community Life
- **Solidarity as One Human Family**
 - Safeguarding the Environment

STATE BUDGET

As the General Assembly and the Governor struggle to balance the state's severe budget imbalance, we remind lawmakers that, according to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' publication, *Economic Justice for All (1986)*, "Economic decisions have human consequences and moral content; they help or hurt people, strengthen or weaken family life, advance or diminish the quality of justice in our land."

We will not support any budget remedies that do not provide prudential resources to human services, support families with children in nonpublic as well as in public schools and carefully consider the tax burden being placed on working families. Any tax increase must be tempered by the burden it imposes; revenues generated must be spent judiciously; and the effort must be combined with political reforms to end the seemingly perpetual series of budget crisis in the state of Illinois.

STAFF

Robert Gilligan
Executive Director

Marilou Gervacio
Director of Social Services/Social Justice

Social Services

Ad-Hoc Committees:
Catholic Cemeteries
Immigration
Peace and Social Justice
Prison and Jail Ministry
Senior Issues

(312) 368-1066
(312) 368-1090 FAX

Zachary Wichmann
Director of Government Relations

Catholics for Life
Defense of Marriage
Education

(217) 528-9200
(217) 528-7214 FAX



LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

*Representing the
Catholic Church in Illinois*

65 E. Wacker Place, Suite 1620
Chicago, IL 60601
Tel.: (312) 368-1066
Fax: (312) 368-1090

108 E. Cook Street
Springfield, IL 62704
Tel.: (217) 528-9200
Fax: (217) 528-7214

www.catholicconferenceofillinois.org

97th GENERAL ASSEMBLY
JANUARY 2011