

**CATHOLIC CONFERENCE OF ILLINOIS**  
**Catholics for Life Legislative Update**

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## STATE LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY

Due to the dramatic Democratic gains in the legislature last November, we were concerned myriad anti-life bills – such as a reincarnation of FOCA and/or a gutting of the Parental Notice of Abortion Act – would be introduced in the spring 2013 session. That did not happen. Planned Parenthood focused its attention on legislation mandating comprehensive sex education in public schools. We remain profoundly concerned that next year will bring a lot of bad legislation, and we need to be on guard and prepared to fully engage in the process against any proposed legislation that seeks to reduce the sanctity of human life.

**House Bill 2675** – This legislation, introduced by Representative Camille Lily (D-Chicago) seeks to require public schools offering sex education, grades 6 through 12, to implement a curriculum of comprehensive sex education. The bill allows for the teaching of abstinence, but effectively prohibits abstinence-only education. The original bill deleted references to marriage in the context of abstinence and demanded the teaching of certain provisions of the Human Rights Act; however, in response to a failed vote in the State Senate last year, which was fueled by our and other's opposition, these provisions were removed from the bill. The proponents of the bill, responding to our pressure, further agreed this year to an amendment making clear the bill's provisions do not apply to nonpublic schools. CCI still opposed the bill in the House Human Services Committee, but it passed by a vote of 9 to 6 on March 13, 2013. The bill passed the House on April 17 by a vote of 66 to 52 and passed the Senate on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 37 to 21. The Governor will sign the bill into law this summer.

**House Bill 2683** – This legislation, introduced by Representative Barbara Wheeler (R-Fox Lake), is identical to the Ultrasound Opportunity Act CCI drafted and introduced in previous years. We introduced the bill this year knowing that our chances for moving forward in the new General Assembly were not good. Indeed, the bill was quickly assigned to the House Human Services Committee, from which it could not pass.

**Life Advocacy Days Campaign** – This annual spring campaign of prayer, fasting, and legislative advocacy was begun last year as an effort of this department. The campaign takes place during the spring legislative session, with each Diocese taking a specific week to encourage their laity to pray, fast and advocate for life and family issues. Each Diocese is also tasked with organizing a contingent to travel to Springfield during their designated week. This year, the Archdiocese of Chicago and the Diocese of Rockford completed their designated weeks in March, while the Dioceses Springfield and Joliet completed their work in April. The Diocese of Belleville and Peoria encouraged their networks to participate in the campaign this year by attaching to one of the other diocesan efforts. As legislation involving abortion was not moving this year, the diocesan contingents focused their advocacy on the comprehensive sex education bill and the redefinition of marriage legislation.

## FEDERAL ISSUES SUMMARY

In addition to previous efforts, the department continues to follow USCCB's lead in fighting against the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) administrative mandate on contraceptives and sterilizations. CCI submitted public comments on the so-called "accommodation" rule issued by HHS on February 6, 2013. The public comment period closed on April 8, 2013. The comments submitted by CCI are closely aligned with USCCB's, and can be found on our web site. We also

participate in regularly scheduled conference calls with USCCB staff for updates on where this issue is headed and what we can do in support.

This summer, CCI is supporting local efforts in the upcoming Fortnight for Freedom, and at USCCB's request, CCI also supports H.R. 940 and S.1204, the Health Care Conscience Rights Act of 2013, and has forwarded alerts about the bill to our networks. The House Bill was introduced on March 4, 2013 and the Senate Bill on June 21, 2013.