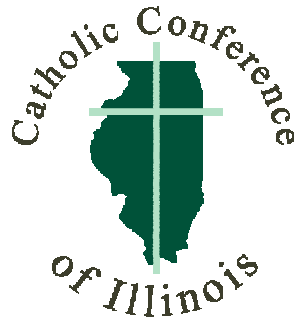


65 East Wacker Place • Suite 1620
Chicago, Illinois 60601
(312) 368-1066
FAX (312) 368-1090



108 East Cook Street
Springfield, Illinois 62704
(217) 528-9200
FAX (217) 528-7214

November 16, 2011

The Honorable Patrick Quinn
Governor of Illinois
James R. Thompson Center
100 W. Randolph St., 16-100
Chicago, IL 60601

Dear Governor Quinn:

The bishops of the Catholic dioceses in Illinois were glad to learn that you expressed your openness to having a conversation about our concerns regarding your involvement with a pro-abortion organization currently being discussed in the media. As you know, a number of us have spoken with you on various occasions in the past several years, but many of our concerns expressed in these conversations have not always been satisfactorily resolved.

We hope that you can make time in your schedule so that we might speak together about several topics, the first being your personal approval of laws permitting the killing of unborn children. Many of the citizens of Illinois recognize the biological fact that abortion kills an unborn child. Consequently, many find themselves disturbed about laws that fail to defend any human being before birth. The Catholic Church has taught for two thousand years that abortion is, in the words of the Second Vatican Council, "a heinous crime." We would like to discuss with you, both as fellow citizens and as pastors of your Church, how you and we should position ourselves publicly on this issue so you may be true to your responsibility as Governor and we may remain true to ours as bishops.

We would also like to speak with you about the consequences of giving legal status to same sex unions. Despite assurances to the contrary, implied in the title and stated in the provisions of the law, the Illinois Religious Freedom Protection and Civil Union Act has been used to drive Catholic Charities in our dioceses from caring for foster children and from sponsoring adoptions. We are under the impression that this move on the part of our State government had your encouragement. We would like to discuss with you whether this or other laws will be used to punish the Catholic Church in other areas of our ministry, because we must continue to teach what is the received wisdom of the human race about the nature of marriage, even of those who are not and never have been Christian. Since the State partners with the Catholic Church in many areas of social and educational services, we are concerned that there might be more repercussions or even that we may be penalized as a "discriminatory" organization because we follow our consciences and the two thousand year tradition and teaching of the Catholic Church.

We also would like to share with you our ongoing concern that religious freedom and liberty of conscience are being restricted. Intemperate and even hate-filled objections have often

been raised about bishops and other religious leaders who speak publicly about moral issues that are also the subject of political debate. We do not believe that, in a free country, citizens lose their right to speak if they are ordained priests or bishops. We also believe that the public debate is best served if people are not silenced just because they are religious believers. We would like the opportunity to ask you directly how you think public debate can be conducted in a way respectful of all and guaranteeing the freedom of religiously informed conscience that has been a source of our self-identity as Americans.

These issues fall outside of the many conversations facilitated by the Catholic Conference of Illinois, which is always concerned about the consequences of legislation for the life and well-being of the poor, about the fair delivery of health care, about aid to children in Catholic schools and so many issues that directly affect the common good of the people of Illinois.

We hope that a time convenient to you might be arranged to speak together about these and any other topics you might choose to discuss.

Sincerely yours,



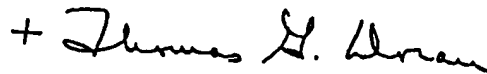
Francis Cardinal George, O.M.I.
Archbishop of Chicago



Most Reverend Edward K. Braxton
Bishop of Belleville



Most Reverend R. Daniel Conlon
Bishop of Joliet



Most Reverend Thomas G. Doran
Bishop of Rockford



Most Reverend Daniel R. Jenky, C.S.C.
Bishop of Peoria



Most Reverend Thomas John Paprocki
Bishop of Springfield-in-Illinois

Most Reverend Francis Kane
Auxiliary Bishop of Chicago

Most Reverend John Manz
Auxiliary Bishop of Chicago

Most Reverend Joseph Perry
Auxiliary Bishop of Chicago

Most Reverend George Rassas
Auxiliary Bishop of Chicago

Most Reverend Alberto Rojas
Auxiliary Bishop of Chicago

Most Reverend Joseph Siegel
Auxiliary Bishop of Joliet

Most Reverend Andrew Wypych
Auxiliary Bishop of Chicago