



Diocese of Springfield in Illinois
Office for Communications

NEWS

Nov. 14, 2011

Contact: Kathie Sass
Office: (217) 698-8500
Email: ksass@dio.org

**STATEMENT OF
MOST REVEREND EDWARD K. BRAXTON, BISHOP OF BELLEVILLE,
MOST REVEREND R. DANIEL CONLON, BISHOP OF JOLIET, AND
MOST REVEREND THOMAS JOHN PAPROCKI, BISHOP OF SPRINGFIELD IN
ILLINOIS**

REGARDING THE ENDING OF APPEALS OF FOSTER CARE LITIGATION

It is with deep regret that we have decided to relinquish our appeals in the litigation concerning the provision of foster care and adoption services by Catholic Charities of the Dioceses of Joliet and Springfield in Illinois and by Catholic Social Services of Southern Illinois in the Diocese of Belleville. This lawsuit had sought clarification as to whether the *Religious Freedom Protection and Civil Unions Act* passed at the end of last year protected the freedom of faith-based agencies to provide foster care and adoption services in accord with their religious beliefs.

The decision not to pursue further appeals was reached with great reluctance, but was necessitated by the fact that the State of Illinois has made it financially impossible for our agencies to continue to provide these services and the courts have refused to grant a stay for these operations to continue while further appeals are pending. Since we now need to close offices and lay off employees, further appeals would be moot.

The Catholic Church has successfully partnered with the State for half a century in providing foster care and adoption services. While the State has forced the Catholic Church out of state-supported foster care and adoption services, the losers will be the children, foster care families and adoptive parents who will no longer have the option of Catholic, faith-based services.

We are sad to lose the dedicated employees who have served our Catholic foster care and adoption services so faithfully for so many years. We are grateful to them and reluctantly bid them farewell with our prayers and best wishes.

Bishop Thomas John Paprocki of Springfield added, “Despite the loss of foster care and adoption services, our Catholic Charities in the Diocese Springfield in Illinois will continue to address the basic human needs of the poor in central Illinois in other ways. The silver lining of this decision is that our Catholic Charities going forward will be able to focus on being more Catholic and more charitable, while less dependent on government funding and less encumbered by intrusive state policies.”

#