

## WHO WE ARE

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-in-Illinois) 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

Illinois' 3.5 million Catholics make up 27 percent of the total state population of 12.9 million. The Church serves her mission through various vocations and religious institutions. Figures are accurate for 2016.

- 973 parishes
- 20 missions
- 2,396 priests
- 325 brothers
- 2,938 sisters
- 1,216 permanent deacons
- 45 Catholic hospitals, serving 8.4 million patients annually
- 21 health care centers, serving 157,000 patients annually
- 11 colleges and universities, with 64,500 students
- 66 high schools, with 36,500 students
- 388 elementary schools, with 103,200 students
- 527 Catholic cemeteries

*CCI strives to uphold Catholic Social Teaching by advocating for favorable state legislation and regulatory policies. The Conference is composed of departments, or areas of interest, that focus on issues key to the Church's interests: Catholics for Life, Education, Promotion & Defense of Marriage, Social Services, and other topics served by ad-hoc committees.*

## CATHOLICS FOR LIFE

- Support legislative efforts designed to reduce and eventually eliminate abortion.
- Oppose legislative efforts or other policy initiatives that undermine the sanctity of human life at any stage from conception to natural death, including euthanasia and the death penalty.
- Defend and expand the Illinois Health Care Right of Conscience Act.

## EDUCATION

- Advocate for the creation of a Tax Credit Scholarship Program to empower parents to make the best educational choices for their children.
- 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 voucher programs and/or for the expansion of the Education Expense Tax Credit – as opportunities exist.
- Work to restore funding to the Textbook Block Grant, Educational Improvement and School Safety Block Grant, and the Parent/Guardian Transportation Reimbursement programs.
- Monitor, shape and/or defeat new legislative or administrative proposals impacting nonpublic schools.

## RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

- Defend the constitutional rights of religious organizations to live and work according to their faith, uninhibited by government mandate. Defend the same rights for individuals and businesses.

## PROMOTION AND DEFENSE OF MARRIAGE

- Support policies that promote marriage and strengthen the family.
- Oppose policies that undermine marriage between one man and one woman.
- Seek better conscience and religious freedom protections for individuals, businesses and religious organizations in regards to Illinois' redefinition of marriage law.

## SOCIAL SERVICES

- Support efforts to protect the right of religious conscience in the provision of social services.
- Support legislation and other initiatives consistent with Catholic moral teaching that effectively address and reduce poverty.
- Encourage the development and implementation of a timely state budget that fully funds programs that make up the state's social services safety net.

## AD-HOC COMMITTEES

- Advocate for legislation and support immigration policies that protect and promote family unity.
- Promote policies that assist low-wage workers in earning a living wage.
- Support initiatives to address criminal justice issues relating to the correctional system, including alternatives to incarceration for non-violent offenders and juveniles, restorative justice efforts, and reentry services for ex-offenders.
- Advocate for programs and initiatives that help seniors maintain independence, rights and safety in a spectrum of senior living situations.
- Advocate on behalf of Catholic cemeteries throughout the state.

## CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

Catholic Social Teaching relies on basic Catholic truths, and can be generally summarized in the following principles:

- Life and dignity of the human person
- Protection of and participation in the family and the community
- Rights of the human person protected, and each person's responsibilities met
- Care for the poor and vulnerable
- Dignity of work and the rights of workers
- Solidarity as one human family
- Care for God's creation

---

## CATHOLIC CONFERENCE OF ILLINOIS

### Social Media

Twitter: [@CatholicConfil](#)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/CatholicConferenceofIllinois](http://www.facebook.com/CatholicConferenceofIllinois)

YouTube: [www.youtube.com/user/CatholicConfil](http://www.youtube.com/user/CatholicConfil)

Instagram: [www.instagram.com/ilcatholic](http://www.instagram.com/ilcatholic)

---

## ILLINOIS CATHOLIC ADVOCACY NETWORK (I-CAN)

I-CAN is a grassroots advocacy email network for you to stay updated on what's happening with CCI. We at CCI ask for your email address and your home address – that's so we know who your state and federal lawmakers are. And if you want to contact your lawmakers about an issue affecting the Church, I-CAN lets you do that.

### ***Want to sign up?***

Go to [www.ilcatholic.org](http://www.ilcatholic.org), and click on "Join I-CAN."

## STAFF

**Robert Gilligan**  
*Executive Director*  
Chicago office

**Zachary Wichmann**  
*Director of Government Relations*  
Springfield office

Catholics for Life  
Education  
Promotion & Defense of Marriage

**Marilou Gervacio**  
*Director of Social Services/Social Justice*  
Chicago office

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

**Mary Massingale**  
*Director of Communications*  
Chicago office

**Kelsey Chisam**  
*Administrative Support*  
Springfield office



## LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

*Representing the  
Catholic Church in Illinois*

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

---

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

[www.ilcatholic.org](http://www.ilcatholic.org)

**100<sup>th</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
JANUARY 2017**