



Catholics at the Capitol

Living Faith in the Public Square



SUMMARY OF MESSAGE TO LEGISLATORS

2011 BIENNIAL BUDGET BILL

While the Wisconsin Catholic Conference does not take a position on the budget as a whole, the Conference does urge individuals to assess budgets in light of their impact on the common good, the extent to which they exercise a preferential option for the poor, and the degree to which they foster solidarity among the citizens of our state.

Urge legislators to:

- Approve budget provisions related to the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program.
- Approve budget provision eliminating the requirement that all health insurance policies provide coverage for contraceptives and contraceptive services.
- Support budget provisions that discontinue state funding of family planning services for men and eliminate funding for community-based family planning programs. These funds should be redirected to programs that promote maternal and child health.
- Restore budget cuts made to the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and indexing to the Homestead Tax Credit Programs.
- Restore the budget's \$20 reduction in the monthly cash grant to families in the Wisconsin Works Program (W-2).
- Oppose limiting enrollment in programs that provide effective treatments for the poor and vulnerable.

HUMAN LIFE

Every human being has intrinsic value. This is why we have a consistent moral vision that calls us not only to oppose all direct threats to human life, but also to promote all things that allow human beings to flourish as free and responsible persons.

Urge legislators to:

- Opt Wisconsin out of offering abortion coverage in any future state health insurance exchange plan.
- Support efforts to combat high regional infant mortality rates for minorities in Wisconsin.
- Support a state adoption tax credit.
- Provide life-affirming support for pregnant women and teen mothers.

IMMIGRATION

In supporting comprehensive immigration reform, the Catholic Church recognizes both the inalienable human rights of immigrants and the legitimate right of a state to control its borders for the common good. These rights need not be opposed to one another, but rather they can and must complement one another.

Urge legislators to:

- Oppose any bill requiring detention for determination of immigrant status and similar immigration laws.
- Oppose budget provision eliminating FoodShare benefits for legal immigrants.
- Oppose budget provision repealing UW resident tuition for unauthorized immigrants.

HEALTH CARE

Health care is more than a commodity; it is a basic human right, an essential safeguard of human life and dignity. In advancing a just and principled health care system, we maintain our devotion to the dignity of the human person.

Urge legislators to:

- Support protections for life and conscience as health care reform measures are implemented in the state.
- Support efforts consistent with the bishops' principles for health care reform, including a priority concern for the poor, encouraging religious provider participation, and the provision of comprehensive care.

10 COMMANDMENTS FOR VISITING YOUR LEGISLATORS

The best way to express an opinion to any public official is a personal visit. Here are some helpful tips to use when visiting a legislator's office:

1. If you want to discuss a particular piece of legislation, be prepared to discuss it when you attend the appointment. Know the topic and the bill number if possible.
2. Be on time for the appointment, but be patient if your legislator encounters unexpected delays because of official business.
3. Don't be upset if you are asked to meet with a staff aide. This is quite common because legislators are often unexpectedly delayed in legislative meetings or on the floor of the Legislature.
4. Above all, know your facts and your position, be as specific as possible.
5. Be brief and concise, 3-5 minutes is best, but cover all points that concern you.
6. When possible, use personal examples. Talk about your own experiences and how the issue affects you.
7. Give your legislator a chance to talk. Respect the legislator's knowledge of the issue and respond to any questions s/he may ask.
8. Don't threaten or be sarcastic! Even if a legislator can't vote for your side of the current issue, s/he may be helpful to you on another occasion.
9. Before you leave, thank your legislator for his/her time.
10. Remember to follow up with the legislative office after your visit and to thank your legislator.