

WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

CAPITOL UPDATE

January 14, 2008

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WCC Opposes Bills on Child Sexual Abuse Lawsuits

Newly introduced bills, [Senate Bill 356](#) (Sen. Julie Lassa, D-Stevens Point) and its companion, [Assembly Bill 651](#) (Rep. Scott Suder, R-Abbotsford), would, if passed: 1) open a three-year window during which anyone who was sexually assaulted as a child could bring a civil lawsuit against those responsible for the assault, including the employer of the perpetrator if the assault occurred in part because the employer was negligent; and 2) completely remove the statute of limitations for future civil actions not already time barred.

The bills are scheduled for public hearings on January 16 and January 24 (see below for times and location).

The WCC opposes this legislation, as outlined in its [Issue Brief](#). Please read the Issue Brief and then contact your legislators, urging them to oppose these bills.

WCC Opposes Repeal of Wisconsin's Abortion Law

Representative Terese Berceau (D-Madison) and Senator Mark Miller (D-Monona) have announced a draft proposal, known as the *Women's Health & Safety Act*, which would repeal Wisconsin's 1849 criminal abortion statute. Wisconsin Statutes s.940.04 prohibits abortions, except when the life of the mother is in danger. This state law cannot be enforced because the U.S. Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision prevents most restrictions on abortion. However, if *Roe v. Wade* is overturned, s.940.04 will take effect again. As a result, WCC strongly opposes its repeal. The WCC will notify subscribers as soon as the bills are introduced and provide an *Issue Brief* on the topic.

WCC Opposes Assisted Suicide Bill

A bill that would allow persons with terminal illnesses to request medications to end their lives will receive a public hearing on January 23 (see below for details). Legislation similar to [SB-151](#) has been introduced in the past, but has never advanced. Nonetheless, **subscribers are asked to contact their legislators, urging them to oppose the bill.**

More information will be forthcoming in a *WCC Action Alert* distributed through our electronic advocacy system. Subscribers to the *Capitol Update* automatically receive these action alerts.

WCC Supports Milwaukee Parental Choice Expansion

On January 8, 2008, the WCC provided testimony in support of [AB-637](#), a bill that would allow eligible students in the City of Milwaukee to attend any religious or independent school serving grades 9-12 in Milwaukee County. Currently, only schools within Milwaukee city limits are allowed to participate in the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP). As a result, many low-income high school students living in Milwaukee are unable to participate in the MPCP because the only school that could realistically serve them is located in a nearby suburb. By including non-public county high schools in the program, the MPCP will be able to meet the needs of students advancing through Choice schools, providing them with more options and allowing students to continue their education in a religious or independent high school.

Catholics at the Capitol Presenter, Earl Madary, Dies

One of the most popular presenters at the WCC's *Catholics at the Capitol*, Professor Earl Madary of Viterbo University, died on December 16, 2007. Earl, along with his friend and colleague Prof. Tom Thibodeau, were known for their dynamic presentations on Catholic social teaching. The WCC will sorely miss Earl's presence at our conference and we extend our heartfelt condolences to his wife, Marci, and to their two children. (*Wausau Daily Herald obituary*)

Upcoming Hearings of Interest

(N.B. Only bills of interest are flagged. In most cases, committees will be considering other bills as well.)

Senate Judiciary, Corrections, and Housing

1pm, Wed, Jan 16, 411 S.

[SB-356](#). Statute of limitations for sexual contact with a child.

Senate Health, Human Services, Insurance, and Job Creation

10am, Thu, Jan 17, 412 E.

[SB-375](#). Health insurance coverage of nervous and mental disorders, alcoholism, and other drug abuse problems.

Senate Public Health, Senior Issues, Long Term Care and Privacy

10am, Wed, Jan 23, 411 S.

[SB-151](#). Permitting certain individuals to make written requests for medication for the purpose of ending their lives, and providing penalties.

Assembly Children and Family Law
9am, Thu, Jan 24, 2008, 328 NW.

[AB-651](#). Statute of limitations for sexual contact with a child.

New Bills of Interest

[SB-349](#). **Milwaukee Parental Choice** (Taylor) Requires certain records for pupils attending a private school participating in the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program. *To Education.*

[SB-356](#). **Statute of Limitations** (Lassa) Statute of limitations for sexual contact with a child. *To Judiciary, Corrections and Housing.*

[SB-375](#). **Mental Health** (Hansen) Health insurance coverage of nervous and mental disorders, alcoholism, and other drug abuse problems. *To Health, Human Services, Insurance, and Job Creation.*

[AB-631](#). **Surrogate Mothers** (Schneider) Maternity coverage for surrogate mothers. *To Health and Healthcare Reform.*

[AB-637](#). **Milwaukee Choice Program** (Pridemore) Allows certain private schools outside the City of Milwaukee to participate in the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program. *To Education Reform.*

[AB-647](#). **Teachers** (Wieckert) Adopts federal law relating to an income tax deduction for certain educators; creates an individual income tax deduction for educators who use their own funds to purchase classroom educational supplies. *To Education.*

[AB-651](#). **Statute of Limitations** (Suder) Statute of limitations for sexual contact with a child. *To Children and Family Law.*

[AB-664](#). **Residential Care** (Krusick) Authorizes access by the long-term care ombudsman or his or her representative to a client or resident in a residential care apartment complex, imposes an annual assessment on certain occupied apartments of residential care apartment complexes. Expands rights of residents of facilities to include residents of residential care apartment complexes. *To Aging and Long Term Care.*

Web Sites of Interest

<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/waml>

- Who are my legislators

<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/leginfo.html>

- 2007-08 Session Schedule
- Weekly Schedule of Committee Activities
- Senate and Assembly Daily Floor Calendar

Capitol Update is a periodic e-mail on legislative issues from the Wisconsin Catholic Conference. To "subscribe" or "unsubscribe" please send a request to office@wisconsincatholic.org.

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