

WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

CAPITOL UPDATE

August 21, 2009

Contents Include:

1. USCCB and WCC Request Action on Health Care Reform
2. Bishops of Wisconsin Issue Statement on Insurance Mandate
3. New Bills of Interest
4. Upcoming Hearings of Interest
5. Web Sites of Interest

USCCB and WCC Request Action on Health Care Reform

As the health care reform debate continues, Catholics are encouraged to engage this issue with their Members of Congress. This is especially important now as most Members are back in Wisconsin during the current congressional recess period.

The Wisconsin Catholic Conference (WCC) and United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) urge you to contact your representatives and senators. Remind them of these key priorities regarding access to health care:

1. Support universal health coverage that protects the life and dignity of all, especially those who are poor and vulnerable. Because Catholic teaching insists that basic health care is a right and is essential to protect human life and dignity, genuine health care reform that protects human life and advances universal coverage is a moral imperative and urgent national priority. For us, universal coverage should be truly universal, assuring decent health care for all from conception to natural death.
2. Oppose any efforts to expand abortion funding, mandate abortion coverage, or endanger the conscience rights of health care providers and religious institutions. Longstanding and widely supported current policies on these issues must be preserved. We urge members of the House and Senate to take all steps necessary to oppose abortion funding, mandated abortion coverage or weakening of conscience rights.
3. Support effective measures to safeguard the health of immigrants, their children, and all of society by expanding eligibility for public programs, such as Medicaid, to all low-income families and vulnerable people, and by offering adequate subsidies for cost-sharing of insurance premiums and out of pocket expenses.

To access helpful resources on health care reform, to learn how to contact your Members of Congress, or to read statements and other health care reform materials published by the USCCB, visit <http://www.usccb.org/healthcare/>.

Please act now.

Bishops of Wisconsin Issue Statement on Insurance Mandate

This week, the bishops of Wisconsin published a [statement](#) on the state budget provision that requires certain insurance policies to include coverage for contraceptive services. The statement reiterates that this provision is “blatantly insensitive” to the moral value and legal rights of Catholics.

New Bills of Interest

[SB-263](#). **State Public Defender** (Coggs) Criteria for determining indigency for purposes of representation by the State Public Defender. To Judiciary.

[AB-353](#). **Voting** (Grigsby) Restores the right to vote to certain persons barred from voting as a result of a felony conviction and changes the information required on voter registration forms. To Corrections and the Courts.

[AB-358](#). **School Environment** (Grigsby) Indoor environmental quality in public and private schools. To Education.

[AB-389](#). **Nursing Homes** (Krusick) Requires nursing homes to notify residents of certain alleged violations. To Aging & Long-Term Care.

Upcoming Hearings of Interest

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

Assembly Corrections and the Courts

10 am, Thu., Aug. 27, 225-NW

Report from the Commission on Reducing Racial Disparities in the Criminal Justice System.
Testimony from invited speakers.

[AB-353](#). **Voting** (Grigsby) Restores the right to vote to certain persons barred from voting as a result of a felony conviction and changes the information required on voter registration forms.

Assembly Education

10 am, Tue., Sept. 8, 417-N

[AB-140](#). **Teachers** (Hixson) Adopts federal law relating to an income tax deduction for certain educators; creates an individual income tax deduction for educators who purchase classroom supplies with personal funds.

[AB-358](#). **School Environment** (Grigsby) Indoor environmental quality in public and private schools.

Assembly Aging and Long-Term Care

10 am, Thu., Sept. 10, 400-NE

[AB-259](#). **Alzheimer's** (Krusick) Care and treatment of persons with Alzheimer's disease or related dementia in residential care facilities; reports on residential care facilities.

[AB-389](#). **Nursing Homes** (Krusick) Requires nursing homes to notify residents of certain alleged violations.

Web Sites of Interest

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

- Who are my legislators

[Directory of Senate Members](#)

[Directory of Assembly Members](#)

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

- 2009-10 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.

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