

WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

CAPITOL UPDATE

December 7, 2007

Contents Include:

1. WCC Opposes Changes to Rules for Abuse Claims
2. WCC Supports Bill to Criminalize Human Trafficking
3. WCC Supports Increased Funding for Public Defenders
4. WCC Supports Parental Leave for School Activities

WCC Opposes Changes to Rules for Abuse Claims

The WCC is opposed to a bill that is expected to be introduced in mid-December, which would repeal the statute of limitations in civil suits relating to child sexual abuse cases, and provide a three-year, one-time “window” in which victims can bring a civil action in cases previously barred by the current statute.

Just four years ago, the legislature amended Wisconsin law to allow civil actions to be brought against alleged child abusers until the victim turns 35 years of age. The Wisconsin Catholic Conference supported that proposal. “But in removing all time limits for future cases and in allowing for suits for abuse that occurred decades ago, this bill goes too far,” a WCC statement explained.

“The Catholic Church is committed to assisting victims of abuse through the healing process, including access to a course of justice that will allow them to repair and rebuild their lives. To this end, the Archdiocese of Milwaukee has reached settlements with over 160 sexual abuse survivors whose claims were time barred and could not be resolved in court. That process remains open to any who wishes to use it,” the statement concluded.

More information will be forthcoming in future editions of the *Capitol Update*.

WCC Supports Bill to Criminalize Human Trafficking

The WCC submitted written [testimony](#) in favor of a bi-partisan bill to make human trafficking in Wisconsin a felony. Among other provisions, [Assembly Bill 544](#) (Rep. Sue Jeskewitz, R-Menomonee Falls) does the following:

- Punishes trafficking of an adult with a fine of up to \$100,000, imprisonment for up to 25 years, or both.
- Punishes trafficking of a child with a fine of up to \$100,000, imprisonment for up to 40 years, or both.
- Ensures that victims of trafficking who are forced to commit a crime are protected from prosecution.

- Permits a court to order restitution for the victim's transportation, housing, childcare, gross income provided in services, and relocation expenses (if necessary for the victim's safety).

The Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice took no action on the bill.

WCC Supports Increased Funding for Public Defenders

In written [testimony](#), the WCC expressed support this week for [Senate Bill 321](#) (Sen. Jim Sullivan, D-Wauwatosa), which would increase the number of State Public Defenders and increase the eligibility standards so that more people living in poverty can have access to legal counsel. The Senate Committee on Judiciary, Corrections, and Housing took no action on the bill.

WCC Supports Parental Leave for School Activities

The WCC this week submitted written [testimony](#) in support of [Senate Bill 195](#) (Sen. Tim Carpenter, D-Milwaukee), which allows employees to take up to 16 hours leave from work annually to attend a child's day care or school function. The Senate Committee on Education took no action on the bill.

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.

Wisconsin Catholic Conference
131 W. Wilson St., Suite 1105
Madison, WI 53703
608/257-0004
www.wisconsincatholic.org