

WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

Capitol Update

November 11, 2011

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Regular Legislative Session in Recess until January

The Legislature on November 3 ended its regular floor sessions for 2011. The next regular floor session will open on January 17, 2012. In the meantime, however, the September Special Session, called by Governor Walker and devoted to economic development, continues along with committee meetings and public hearings.

Governor Signs Parental Choice Bill

Governor Walker has signed into law a bill supported by the WCC and other Choice advocates that would make administrative changes to the Parental Choice Programs. [Senate Bill 234](#) (Sen. Leah Vukmir, R-Wauwatosa), now [2011 Wisconsin Act 47](#), affects provisions concerning Choice Program school accreditation, Choice school certificates of occupancy, fees charged to Choice students, the process for determining income eligibility for Choice families, and standards of conduct for Choice schools and staff.

Senate Passes Bill to Reform Sex Education

On a party line vote of 17-15, the Senate last week passed [Senate Bill 237](#) (Sen. Mary Lazich, R-New Berlin) the “Strong Communities/Healthy Kids Act,” which would provide local districts flexibility in teaching human growth and development classes, as well as permit abstinence-based instruction. The WCC presented [testimony](#) in support of the bill. A public hearing is scheduled next week for the companion bill, [Assembly Bill 337](#) (see below).

Assembly Passes Bill Banning Unpardoned Felons in Schools

The Assembly, on a voice vote, has passed [Senate Bill 86](#) (Sen. Alberta Darling, R-River Hills), which would permit public and private schools to refuse to employ or to terminate from employment an unparoled felon. The WCC previously presented [testimony](#) for information on the bill. The bill now awaits the Governor's action.

Legislature Advances Bills on Student Safety and Health

The Legislature has passed two bills related to education, both of which were amended with the WCC's support. [Senate Bill 42](#) (Sen. Van Wanggaard, R-Racine) expands mandatory reporting in Wisconsin, requiring all school personnel in both public and private schools to report the suspected abuse or neglect of children to the proper authorities. The WCC issued a [press release](#) noting its support for an amendment to the bill that expanded the new reporting requirements to all private school personnel. [Senate Bill 45](#) (Sen. Luther Olsen, R-Ripon) would alter many of the requirements instituted last session under 2009 Wisconsin Act 160 regarding the administration of medications to pupils. The legislation was amended to focus on four kinds of medication administration and removes the mandate that training in private schools be approved by the Department of Public Instruction. Both bills await action by the Governor.

Upcoming Hearings of Interest

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

Assembly Education

10:00am, Wed., Nov. 16, 417-N

[AB-337](#). **Sex Ed** (Thiesfeldt) Instruction in human growth and development.

Assembly Insurance

10:00am, Thu., Nov. 17, 417-N

[AB-154](#). **Abortion** (Vos) Prohibits coverage of abortions through health plans sold through exchanges.

New Bills of Interest

[SB-272](#). **Homestead Credit** (King) Restores indexing provisions to the homestead tax credit. To Public Health, Human Services and Revenue.

[SB-273](#). **Badger Health Benefit Authority** (Vinehout) Creates Badger Health Benefit Authority; health benefit exchange operation. To Health.

[SB-277](#). **Work Environment** (Coggs) Prohibits abusive work environments; permits civil actions. To Labor, Public Safety and Urban Affairs.

[SB-279](#). **Medical Assistance** (Taylor) Family planning services under the MA waiver program. To Insurance and Housing.

[SB-282](#). **Family Planning** (Taylor) Eliminates restrictions on DHS distribution of funds for family planning. To Finance.

[AB-344](#). **Employment Discrimination** (Zamarripa) Employment discrimination based on being unemployed or under employed. To Labor and Workforce Development.

[AB-345](#). **Long-Term Care** (Richards) Arbitration agreements used in long-term care facilities; civil and criminal actions against health care providers and long-term care providers; use of incident and occurrence reports in civil and criminal actions; use as evidence of records given to a regulatory agency; use in criminal actions of records of reviews and evaluations of health care providers; limits on non-economic damages and punitive damages. To Aging and Long-Term Care.

[AB-348](#). **Family Planning** (Taylor) Family planning services. To Finance.

[AB-349](#). **Family Planning** (Roys) Family planning services under Medical Assistance waiver program. To Insurance.

[AB-350](#). **Employment Discrimination** (Berceau) Prohibits employment discrimination based on credit history. To Labor and Workforce Development.

[AB-364](#). **Work Environments** (Roys) Prohibits abusive work environments; permits civil actions. To Labor and Workforce Development.

[AB-368](#). **Homestead Tax** (Milroy) Restores indexing provisions to the homestead tax credit. To Housing.

[AB-371](#). **Abortion** (Litjens) Requires voluntary and informed consent to an abortion, information on domestic abuse services, giving a woman an abortion-inducing drug, repealing criminal sanctions against women who perform or obtain certain abortion procedures, and providing a penalty.

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>

- 2011-12 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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