

Capitol Update

October 28, 2011

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Senate Passes Abortion Opt-Out Bill

On a vote of 17-16, the Senate on October 20, passed [Senate Bill 92](#) (Sen. Rich Zipperer, R-Pewaukee), which would prohibit coverage of abortion through health care exchanges under the federal health care law. The bill now awaits action in the Assembly. The WCC previously presented [testimony](#) in favor of the bill.

Senate Passes Bill Banning Unpardoned Felons in Schools

The Senate this week 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 unpardoned felon. The WCC previously presented [testimony](#) for information on the bill. The bill now awaits action in the Assembly.

USCCB Urges Action on DOMA Repeal Vote in Senate Judiciary Committee

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) is urging Catholics to contact their U.S. Senators, asking them to oppose the repeal of the U.S. Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). The U.S. Senate's Judiciary Committee is scheduled to vote on November 3 on a bill to repeal DOMA. To learn more and take action online, go to: <http://capwiz.com/catholicbishops/issues/alert/?alertid=55415506>.

WCC Supports Bill to Reform Sex Education

The WCC presented [testimony](#) to the Senate Committee on Education on October 19, in support of [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 Committee amended the bill and voted it out of committee.

WCC Opposes Unpardoned Felon Bill

The WCC presented [testimony](#) in opposition to [Senate Bill 207](#) (Sen. Alberta Darling, R-River Hills) at an October 24 hearing of the Senate Committee on Labor, Public Safety, and Urban Affairs. The bill would permit any employer to terminate or refuse to employ any person convicted of an unpardoned felony. The WCC had earlier expressed similar opposition to the companion bill, Assembly Bill 286. Also speaking in opposition to the bill were representatives from groups like Madison-area Urban Ministry and Milwaukee's Project Return, both of which help ex-offenders reintegrate into society. Neither bill has advanced passed a public hearing.

Senate Passes Two Education Bills with WCC Support

This past week, the Senate passed two bills relating to education and private schools. The WCC supported administrative changes for the Parental Choice Programs proposed in [Senate Bill 234](#) (Sen. Leah Vukmir, R-Wauwatosa). The bill 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.

The Senate also passed [Senate Bill 45](#) (Sen. Luther Olsen, R-Ripon), which alters some of the requirements instituted last session under 2009 Wisconsin Act 160 related to the administration of medication to pupils. The Wisconsin Catholic Conference (WCC) supported this bill, including certain amendments to the bill, as the proposed changes better facilitate training and administration of medication within schools.

New Bills of Interest

[SB-237](#). **Sex Ed** (Lazich) Instruction in human growth and development. To Education.

[SB-243](#). **Youth Athletics** (Darling) Concussions and other head injuries sustained in youth athletic activities. To Public Health, Human Services and Revenue.

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

[AB-339](#). **MA** (Pasch) Eliminates ability of Department of Health Services to alter Medical Assistance (MA) eligibility, provided payment methods, other MA procedures by policy. To Insurance.

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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