

## WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

### EYE ON THE CAPITOL

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#### WCC POLICY POSITIONS BRING A NONPARTISAN VISION OF HOPE TO LEGISLATIVE DEBATES

By John Huebscher, Executive Director

For those who engage the policies by which we govern ourselves, the beginning of an odd-numbered year is a time for defining a vision. Governors set their vision with their state of the state message and their budget address. Legislators do it by their “priority bills.” The Wisconsin Catholic Conference does so by sharing its Policy Positions for the new session.

The vision of the WCC’s Policy Positions is one of enduring hope. Our themes and priorities read the signs of the times, but they aren’t swayed by elections or headlines. They are grounded in the principles of Catholic Social Teaching and the values they uphold. These are timeless. So, as in other sessions, the WCC’s positions reflect:

- An uncompromising commitment to uphold the value of human life and dignity of all people;
- A commitment to family and community, and the right of all to participate in the life of the community;
- A reminder that human rights are linked to our responsibility to develop and give of our gifts for the good of others;
- A reminder that a fundamental measure of our society is how we care for and stand with people who lack the resources and opportunities available to most of us;
- An affirmation of the dignity of work and the people who do that work;
- A recognition that we are one human family and that the principle of solidarity binds people of all races, nations, and economic strata to each other;
- A vision of stewardship that commands us to care for that which God entrusted to us since the dawn of our creation.

These principles are accompanied by positions on a number of policy issues the WCC has engaged over the years. They reflect consultation and discussion with diocesan department heads, the staff of diocesan agencies, and the clergy and lay Catholics who advise us on policy matters. While nearly every position overlaps with stances taken by other groups or organizations, the unified whole of these positions is unique to the Catholic tradition.

This means that our positions are clearly nonpartisan. Democrats and Republicans alike will find many areas of common ground with our positions. Many in both parties will also find some of what we say challenging to their agenda or political priorities.

The fact that the WCC may disagree with other citizens and our leaders is nothing more than democracy in action and our civil conversation in progress. And society benefits from it.

British Prime Minister David Cameron put it well in his farewell address to Pope Benedict as the Holy Father concluded his visit to the United Kingdom last year.

“People do not have to share a religious faith or agree with religion on everything to see the benefit of asking the searching questions that you have posed to us about our society and how we treat ourselves and each other. You have really challenged the whole country to sit up and think, and that can only be a good thing.”

So when our fellow citizens review our policy positions and the legislative testimony that expands on them in the coming session, they will find an invitation to think about how we treat each other.

And that can only be a good thing.

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NOTE: The Policy Positions may be found in their entirety at [www.wisconsincatholic.org](http://www.wisconsincatholic.org).

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