



WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE 2025-26 SESSION PRIORITIES

For Catholics, all public policies should be measured by how they affect the life and dignity of the human person, the needs of families, and those who live in poverty and on the margins. Catholic social teaching holds that every person must be respected from conception until natural death and be able to participate as fully as possible in the life of the community.

The bishops of Wisconsin urge Wisconsin lawmakers to advance the nonpartisan priorities listed below (whether in the budget or in separate bills) to protect life and promote the common good. Special attention must be given to the well-being of children and families. The priorities below are not exhaustive; for additional information, read the WCC's full 2025 Public Policy Positions at [wisconsincatholic.org](https://www.wisconsincatholic.org).

Protect Human Life & Dignity

Every human life is sacred and deserves protection. Wisconsin must take active measures to ensure that pro-woman, pro-child, and pro-family policies are enacted into law.

- Promote all legislation that upholds life and oppose abortion, assisted suicide, IVF, and surrogacy.
- Clarify state statute to say that a medical procedure designed to prevent the death of a pregnant woman, such as the removal of a miscarriage or ectopic pregnancy, is not an abortion.
- Increase the dependent tax exemption and designate preborn children as dependents on income taxes.
- Combat human trafficking, domestic violence, and abuse of vulnerable persons.
- Support a task force on missing and murdered African American women and girls.
- Regulate artificial intelligence so that it does not give rise to new forms of exploitation and inequality.

Strengthen Marriage & Families

Family is the central institution of social life, with marriage between one man and woman at its core. Raising children should be supported in economic and social policy, with special attention and care for broken families.

- Promote marriage between one man and one woman, especially for the well-being of children.
- Oppose making references to marriage, spouses, and parentage gender-neutral in state statute.
- Assist families with their adoption expenses.
- Expand opportunities for safe and affordable child care.
- Increase the Earned Income Tax Credit, Homestead Tax Credit, and Married Persons Tax Credit.
- Create a sales tax exemption for diapers, baby products, breastfeeding equipment, and feminine hygiene products.
- Provide grant funding for diaper banks.
- Require age verification for viewing pornography to protect minors.

Assist People Experiencing Poverty & Vulnerability

All people deserve access to basic human needs to live in a dignified manner. Whether in policy or budget decisions, the Church urges particular concern for those facing poverty and other vulnerable circumstances.

- Increase the supply of affordable housing and workforce housing.
- Increase funding to prevent homelessness, especially for women, children, and elders.
- Connect Wisconsin food banks and pantries with Wisconsin producers to provide food to families experiencing hunger.
- Improve foster care and provide assistance to those youth exiting foster care.
- Protect against predatory lending.
- Foster employment opportunities for all and decent working conditions.

Protect Religious Liberty & Conscience Rights

The First Amendment safeguards every person's freedom to exercise faith in the public square. Religious liberty protects the right to worship and to serve others, especially the poor, in keeping with our Catholic faith. No one should be forced to violate their conscience.

- Protect religious liberty and conscience rights, especially in education and health care.
- Protect the freedom to serve those in need and allow religious organizations to operate in accordance with their mission.

Support Students, Parents & Schools

Education is the surest path to full participation in social, economic, and political life. Parents are the primary educators of their children and have the right to choose appropriate schooling for their children, whether public, private, religious, or homeschool.

- Support parental rights in education and invest in all types of schools.
- Increase school safety funding for all types of schools.
- Increase funding for special education and the Special Needs Scholarship Program.
- Strengthen Wisconsin's parental choice programs.
- Require sports teams to be designated by sex assigned at birth or as co-ed.

Improve Access to Healthcare

Affordable and quality health care is vital to the human person. Wisconsin must ensure healthcare is available for those experiencing poverty, loss of insurance, unemployment, or other vulnerable circumstances.

- Extend the postpartum eligibility for women in the Medicaid program to 12 months.
- Protect Medicaid funding to ensure adequate coverage for patients.
- Support elders and persons with disabilities with quality care and pay caregivers fair wages.
- Include pregnancy as a qualifying life event for health insurance special enrollment periods.
- Fund pregnancy resource centers that provide ultrasounds and treatment for STIs.
- Expand home visiting services for newborns.
- Establish a psychiatric residential treatment facility for youth.
- Oppose requiring health insurance plans to cover contraception.
- Oppose gender transitioning for children.

Pursue Restorative Justice

Criminal justice not only protects public order and provides justice to victims, but it also serves to rehabilitate and reintegrate those who have committed crimes. Wisconsin must practice restorative justice that fosters safety, accountability, and reconciliation.

- Return all 17-year-olds to the juvenile justice system.
- Abolish life without parole for juvenile offenders.
- Expand the conditions under which an individual may have their criminal record expunged of a crime.
- Fund community reentry centers.

Welcome Immigrants & Refugees

As every person is made in God's image and likeness, immigrants, refugees, and asylees deserve to be treated with dignity, respect, and compassion. Wisconsin must especially protect families and access to basic services.

- Protect and welcome all persons who have been lawfully admitted.
- Distinguish between immigrants who present genuine risks and dangers to society, and therefore may be lawfully expelled, and those who have been here for years, have no criminal record, and have lived peacefully and contributed to the common good.

Care for Creation & Preserve Natural Resources

The earth has been entrusted to us. Our use of it must be directed by God's plan for creation, not simply for our own benefit. Wisconsin policy must be guided by a concern for generations to come.

- Repair or replace lead services lines, contaminated wells, and aging septic systems.
- Reduce toxins from our air, land, and water.
- Support sustainable farming and the consumption of local foods.