



Legislative Action Alerts

Stop Human Trafficking

The Catholic Conference of Ohio supports SB 235 (Fedor, Grendell) & HB 493 (Chandler) that specifically prohibits *human trafficking* within Ohio law. *Human trafficking* is a horrific crime against the basic dignity and rights of the human person. Ohio is one of only seven states without a specific felony offense of *human trafficking*.

Human trafficking is the use of force, fraud, or coercion to compel a person to provide labor, services, or commercial sex against that person's will. It is a form of modern-day slavery, and it affects both foreign nationals and American citizens.

A recent study by the Ohio Attorney General's *Trafficking in Persons Research Commission* estimates that over one thousand children are trafficked in Ohio each year, while several thousand more are considered to be at risk.

Creating a new felony offense of *human trafficking* in Ohio means prosecutors will no longer have to stitch together other crimes, which often carry lighter sentences, in order to stop human traffickers from harming vulnerable people in Ohio.

Support Payday Lending Reform

The Catholic Conference of Ohio supports continued reform of Ohio's payday lending practices. House Bill 486 provides consumer protections consistent with the intent of Ohio's 2008 Payday Reform Act. HB 486 will help protect borrowers from excessive payday lending fees, while allowing lenders to maintain reasonable cost-of-business fees. Please contact your state Senator and encourage a YES vote.

After passage of the 2008 Payday Reform Act, and ratification by the majority of voters in a statewide referendum, the majority of payday lenders shifted their practices in order to continue charging high interest fees. Currently, payday lenders are charging new origination and check cashing fees, in addition to interest and other fees. Some of these fees are assessed every week. The cost to the borrower often remains just as burdensome as before the Payday Reform Act was passed. HB 486 addresses this shift.

House Bill 486 prohibits payday lenders from charging a fee to cash the loan check that they just issued. It prohibits payday lenders from charging an origination fee or a credit check fee more than once in a 90-day period. It also prohibits payday lenders from charging a fee to broker loans from another organization or a fee to act as a credit service organization on behalf of the borrower.

The Catholic Conference of Ohio supports lending models that provide fair and helpful loans for persons in need. In the teachings of our faith we have many warnings about usury and exploitation of people. Lending practices that, intentionally or unintentionally, take unfair advantage of one's desperate circumstances are unjust. Catholic Social Teaching demands respect for the dignity of persons, preferential concern for the poor and vulnerable, and the pursuit of the common good. These principles coupled with our teaching on economic justice animate our questioning of current payday lending practices.

Legislative Contact Information

www.legislature.state.oh.us
1-800-282-0253

Sen. __ Senate Building, Columbus, OH 43215-4276

Rep. __ 77 S. High St., Columbus, OH 43215-6111

Primary Election May 4, 2010

In the Catholic Tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue. Please vote in the May 4, 2010 Primary.

There are two statewide issues. Issue 1 authorizes \$700 Million in General Revenue Bonds to promote economic growth. Issue 2 moves the location of the previously approved Columbus casino.

Voters are encouraged to study, pray and reflect upon these statewide issues. The Catholic Conference of Ohio believes each of these issues involves prudential decisions. Conscientious voters may arrive at differing positions on these issues. The Catholic bishops of Ohio have chosen not to recommend a position on these issues.

Executions Continue in Ohio at a Record Pace: One per Month

Ohio has scheduled one execution per month through November 2010. The next execution is scheduled for May 13, 2010.

Society has a duty to defend life against violence and to reach out to victims of crime. Yet our nation's increasing reliance on the death penalty cannot be justified. Because we have other ways to protect society that are more respectful of human life, the Catholic church supports efforts to end the use of the death penalty and, in the meantime, to restrain its use through broader use of DNA evidence, access to effective counsel, and efforts to address unfairness and injustice related to application of the death penalty.

Restoration of State Education Monies for Catholic School Students Remains High Priority

The Catholic Conference of Ohio continues to advocate for the restoration of chartered-nonpublic school monies cut from the state budget. These monies help students in Catholic schools. Provisions were adopted in HB 318 that may allow some level of restoration, provided certain budget surpluses occur.

The Conference is concerned that surpluses may be slight, and is pursuing additional funding possibilities.

Comprehensive Immigration Reform Supported by the Catholic Bishops of Ohio

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic organizations nationwide have formed the Catholic Campaign for Comprehensive Immigration Reform which supports the following:

- A path to citizenship for the 10-12 million undocumented people in the U.S.;
- Reform of our employment-based immigration system, so that migrant workers can enter the United States and work in a safe, regulated and humane manner;
- Reform of the family-based immigration system, so that waiting times or backlogs to reunite families are significantly reduced;
- Restoration of due process protections for immigrants; and
- Policies to address the root causes of migration, such as economic development in poor countries.

Bishops Call For Civility and Vigilance In Healthcare Reform Debate

As implementation of the Healthcare Reform Act proceeds, the Catholic Bishops call for civility within the ongoing debate, vigilance in monitoring the abortion-related provisions, and continued advocacy to address profound flaws related to abortion, conscience protections, and needed coverage for immigrants.



Tim Pond Retires from the Catholic Conference of Ohio after Twenty-One Years as Associate Director for the Department on Health Affairs. Thank you, Tim!!

