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November Statewide Ballot Issues

There are three statewide issues on the November 8, 2011 ballot.

Issue 1: A legislatively initiated constitutional amendment raising the age of those occupying a judicial office from 70 to 75.

Issue 2: A referendum approving Ohio's new collective bargaining laws for public employees.

Issue 3: A voter-initiated constitutional amendment that allows Ohioans and insurers to opt out of the new federal health care provisions requiring the purchase of health insurance coverage.

The Catholic Bishops of Ohio have taken a neutral position on all three of these issues. Each issue involves a prudential judgment where people of good will may differ as to their vote.

Catholic Conference of Ohio's Bulletin Inserts/ Educational Handouts regarding the Statewide Ballot Issues

[Color Inserts/Handouts](#) (PDF) (3 pages)

[Black & White Inserts/Handouts](#) (PDF) (3 pages)

Please link to the Catholic Conference of Ohio's web page on [State Ballot Issues](#) for more extensive information and resources.

Life Issues

[The Viable Infants Protection Act](#): HB 78 was signed into law on July 20, 2011. This bill prohibits, except in a medical emergency, an abortion after the 20th week of gestation unless the physician determines, in the physician's good faith medical judgment, that the unborn child is not viable after performing required tests to determine the unborn child's viability.

Unless challenged, the bill will go into effect on October 20, 2011.

Several other Life bills are making their way through the legislature:

[The Heartbeat Bill](#): HB 125 prohibits an abortion of an unborn human individual with a detectable fetal heartbeat. This bill passed the House on June 28, 2011. Hearings are expected to occur in the Senate this Fall.

There has been considerable debate, both within the legislature and among well-intentioned pro-life advocates, whether such legislation will be found constitutional and able to be implemented. Changes continue to be discussed to help unify pro-life advocates around this legislation.

The Catholic Conference of Ohio supports the intent of HB 125 and is working to help resolve concerns and differences regarding specific language and constitutional interpretations.

[HB 79](#) prohibits coverage of abortion in state health insurance exchanges established under

the federal healthcare reform bill. It passed the House on March 9, 2011.

[HB 63](#) and [SB 8](#) revise Ohio's current Judicial Bypass for Parental Consent law. The bills will provide further guidance to judges in determining a minor's maturity to bypass parental consent prior to an abortion. HB 63 passed the House on March 15, 2011. It passed out of the Senate Health Committee on June 23, 2011. It awaits a full Senate vote.

[HB 298](#): This legislation was recently introduced in the House. It will redirect millions of taxpayer dollars away from abortion-providing groups like Planned Parenthood and towards the hundreds of health centers that provide responsible health care for women, their children and unborn children.

The Ohio legislature also passed provisions in the budget bill, HB 153, to prevent state funding for non-therapeutic abortions. The first bans abortions from being performed in public hospitals. The second prohibits abortion coverage in insurance plans of local public employees.

For additional legislation and further information link to the Catholic Conference of Ohio's page on [Ending Abortion](#)

Education Updates

State Budget Helps Catholic Schools and Students

The Ohio House and Senate agreed to a budget that restores state aid to Catholic and other chartered nonpublic school students and expands school choice.

An additional \$15+ million was added to the *Auxiliary Services* and *Administrative Cost Reimbursement* line items each year of the next biennium.

The adjustments total approximately:

\$124 M. in fiscal year 2012 and \$126 M. in fiscal year 2013 for *Auxiliary Services*;

\$56 M. in fiscal year 2012 and \$57 M. in fiscal year 2013 for *Administrative Cost Reimbursement*.

The *Auxiliary Services Program* provides state dollars for academic and health services, textbooks, instructional materials and equipment for students in Catholic and other chartered nonpublic schools. The *Administrative Cost Reimbursement Program* reimburses chartered nonpublic schools for administrative and clerical costs incurred in meeting governmental requirements.

Language also was included in the Budget that expands the definitions of technological equipment for *Auxiliary Services* that Catholic and other chartered nonpublic school students can receive on loan from school districts.

In addition, the Budget included the *Jon Peterson Special Education Scholarship Program* that will provide opportunities for students who have documented disabilities within one of the six categories as defined in the Ohio Revised Code. The program, modeled after Rep. Peterson's legislation introduced a few years ago, provides opportunities for children based on their needs, not what system of schools they attend. This program will start next school year.

The Budget also included an additional \$5 million appropriated for the *Cleveland Scholarship and Tutoring Program* and a new provision for high school students to be permitted as first-time scholarship recipients. Unfortunately, language was removed from the final version of the Budget that would have eliminated the current 75 and 90 percent limitations on Cleveland scholarships.

The *Ed Choice Scholarship Program*, which was capped at 14,000 students, will be expanded to 30,000 students in 2012 and 60,000 students in 2013.

For more information contact Larry Keough at the Catholic Conference of Ohio.

Concern for the Poor

Challenges for Human Service Providers

On June 30, 2011 the state budget bill, HB 153, was enacted. The bill is both helpful and challenging. It provides strong support for Catholic school students and offers further protections for unborn children. The cuts to human services were mitigated, yet remain challenging.

Throughout the budget process, many cuts were proposed to address a multi billion dollar shortfall. In the end, funding was either increased, maintained or only partially cut in the following human services areas: hunger programs, mental health programs, adoption services, kinship care, TANF, childcare, immunizations, PASSPORT, housing, prenatal care, and early child care programs.

Catholic Charities agencies were pleased with changes reducing duplicative public accountability measures. Catholic hospital were generally satisfied with their funding levels, Medicaid revisions and quality assurance provisions.

The news was not so good for Catholic nursing homes. Funding for all nursing homes was cut significantly. Catholic not-for-profit nursing homes will find such reductions extremely challenging. While efforts were made to balance nursing home cuts with increased emphasis on home care such as PASSPORT, Catholic nursing homes that have a high number of Medicaid-dependent residents will be hard pressed to absorb such cuts.

The Catholic Conference will remain vigilant in advocating for the needs of the poor and vulnerable. With so many hurting people, Ohio needs to maximize as many public, private and faith-based resources as possible.



OCEA Convention
[Living Faith, Giving Hope](#)
October 3 & 4, 2011
Hyatt Regency & Greater Columbus
Convention Center
Columbus Ohio



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