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**STATEMENT OF OHIO BISHOPS  
REGARDING CONCEALED WEAPON LEGISLATION  
MAY 25, 1999**

The Catholic Bishops from throughout Ohio reissued the following statement:

We oppose legislation which would change Ohio laws by easing current restrictions against the carrying of concealed weapons.

Today, fear is paralyzing and polarizing our communities. Legislation purporting to offer greater protection to the public by putting more guns in the purses and pockets of the people of Ohio is a false hope. Creating conditions which increase the likelihood of the use of handguns by greater numbers of people will result in more violence and more deaths.

Such legislation will promote a greater erosion of a public understanding of the dignity and sacredness of life. Our violence-prone society can be better served by pursuing policies which minimize, rather than increase, the use of handguns.

More than ever, churches, schools neighborhood groups and social institutions need to intensify efforts at educating people about how to resolve conflicts peaceably. We need to redouble efforts to teach people alternatives to violence through enhanced mediation and conflict resolution skills. There are numerous forces that fuel the culture of violence in society - the disintegration of the family, the increase in substance abuse, the powerful and often destructive messages of the media, and the lack of economic opportunity that enslaves the lives of poor. These can and must be addressed at their roots.

Violence is unacceptable. So, too, are public policies that may increase the proclivity to use deadly force. We remain deeply committed to upholding the value of human life and opposing those forces which threaten it.