

## WCC 2009 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

### LIFE ISSUES

#### PRINCIPLES

*Human life is sacred. The dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society. Direct attacks on innocent persons are never morally acceptable, at any stage or in any condition...Actions that are intrinsically evil are so deeply flawed that they are always opposed to the authentic good of persons. They must always be rejected and opposed and must never be supported or condoned...Our calling is to a comprehensive commitment to the life and dignity of every human being from conception to natural death.*

Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, USCCB, 2007

The Legislature has considered but not adopted amendments to death penalty statutes, including requiring DNA for a conviction and eliminating those with severe mental disorders from being eligible for the death penalty. Bills abolishing the death penalty have been introduced but not considered.

Public policy makers in Washington have not fully recognized the importance of an adequate conscience clause. Faith-based groups and individuals deserve recognition and support as responsive, effective partners, especially in providing services to the poorest communities. Conscience clauses allow us as Catholics to honor our mission by partnering to provide services without compromising our beliefs. In health care and other human services, conscience clauses would provide the protections necessary.

For several years legislation has been introduced requiring parental notification for a minor considering an abortion. There has not been a public hearing on this issue, despite the fact that there is a lack of consistency in the laws regarding parental consent in medical procedures for minors. 43 states have parental notification requirements for abortion, recognizing that those under the age of 18 need the support of their parents.

The State established a public-private partnership in 2005 known as the Life Sciences Discovery Fund. Policies regarding biotechnology and human experimentation should respect the inherent dignity of human life from conception. The Life Sciences Discovery Fund could be used to fund embryonic stem cell research. To date, this research has produced no positive results. WSCC opposes using embryonic stem cells in research.

In the recent 2008 election I-1000 legalizing assisted suicide passed. Efforts will be made to enact safeguards to protect human life and dignity.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

##### WSCC SUPPORTS:

- Eliminating the death penalty for mentally ill person
- Abolishing the death penalty
- Enacting conscience clauses that honor religious freedom
- Requiring parental notification for all medical procedures performed on minors
- Ensuring safeguards that protect human life

##### WSCC OPPOSES:

- Using embryonic stem cells in research
- Legalizing physician assisted suicide