WSCC 2010 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

DEATH PENALTY: The death penalty violates respect for human life and dignity, and is opposed by WSCC. Its application is deeply flawed and biased by factors such as race, the quality of legal representation, and where the crime was committed. In other states there is serious re-examination of the death penalty—its fairness and effectiveness and its social and moral dimensions. In Washington State, there have been hearings on abolishing the death penalty, or at least eliminating it for those with severe mental disorders. Neither have been passed. Advocates will work to have legislation passed that abolishes the death penalty or at least restricts its application.

CONSCIENCE CLAUSES: In Washington State, policy makers have not included adequate conscience clauses in state law. Faith-based groups and individuals deserve recognition and support as responsive, effective partners, especially in providing services to the poorest communities. Conscience clauses allow individuals to honor their consciences when providing services. In health care and other human services, conscience clauses would provide the necessary protections.

LIFE SCIENCES FUND: The state established a public-private partnership known as the Life Sciences Discovery Fund that supports medical research. Policies regarding biotechnology and human experimentation should respect the inherent dignity of human life from conception. WSCC opposes using embryonic stem cells in research.

ASSISTED SUICIDE: In 2008, voters legalized assisted suicide by passing Initiative 1000. Twenty-nine vulnerable and ill people have requested the lethal drugs in our state. Proponents of assisted suicide reported that eleven people used the prescribed drugs to end their live in the first six months since enactment of the law. Efforts will be made to establish safeguards to protect human life.

RECOMMENDATIONS

WSCC SUPPORTS:

- Abolishing the death penalty; eliminating the death penalty for mentally ill persons
- Enacting conscience clauses that honor religious freedom
- Ensuring safeguards that protect human life

WSCC OPPOSES:

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