

## LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES OF THE CALIFORNIA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

The California Catholic Conference (CCC) is the official public policy voice of the Catholic Church in California. We advocate with policy makers and the public to advance the Catholic vision of human life and dignity, the good society and concern for those who are poor and vulnerable. We offer education to Catholics and the general public. We empower Catholics to put their faith into action consistent with Catholic teaching.

### REVERENCE FOR LIFE

We oppose abortion and, until it becomes illegal, we support restrictions on its practice. We also oppose the legalization of assisted suicide as well as the public funding of both it and abortion. We support patient-focused, quality end-of-life care and responsible patient autonomy. We support policies and services that assist pregnant women to make life-affirming choices. We support stem cell research that does not destroy or clone human embryos. We advocate for life in prison rather than the use of the death penalty.

### PROMOTION OF HUMAN DIGNITY

We advocate for the right of each person, especially children and the elderly, to have access to the basic necessities of life—food, shelter, work, education, healthcare and a safe healthy environment. We advocate for policies that will allow those in poverty and the working poor the opportunity to participate within the competitive workforce and become self-sufficient. We oppose unjust discrimination, racism, torture and human trafficking.

### EDUCATION

We advocate for the high quality education of all California students attending our public and private schools from early childhood through college, especially for those most in need. We affirm that all parents and guardians have both the right and the responsibility to direct their children's education, including the choice of public, charter, independent, or faith-based schooling. We support the best preparation, support and accountability of teachers to help them achieve successful careers as professional educators. We believe that educational reforms, resources, creative public/private partnerships, and policy decisions must be implemented at the level closest to actual teaching and learning situations.

### FAMILY LIFE

We affirm marriage, which unites a woman and man with each other and any children born to them, as the basic foundation of society. We advocate for children's right to be in a stable family. We advocate for work, tax policies, welfare, foster care and adoption policies that focus on the wellbeing of children and enhance family unity and stability. We support the fundamental right of parents to make the best decisions for their children.

### CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME

We believe that the Earth is "Our Common Home". As such we must be good stewards of the planet entrusted to our care. We affirm that water is vital; indispensable for human life and supporting healthy ecosystems, communities, and economies. It is essential to manage water wisely through both times of plenty and scarcity. We support measures that respect our world's climate as a common good, which must be preserved and protected. We advocate for environmental justice that embraces subsidiarity and global solidarity when addressing ecological issues, so as to hear both the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor.

### RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

We affirm that all persons have inherent dignity specifically victims, offenders and their families. We support policies and programs that address the needs of victims. We support programming to improve prospects for offenders returning to their families and communities. We advocate for policies that help reduce violence in local communities. We support chaplains who care for the spiritual needs of those incarcerated in our prisons and jails. We advocate for life in prison rather than the use of the death penalty.

### FAITH IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE

We affirm the fundamental principal of religious liberty as set forth in both the U.S. and California constitutions which includes the right of people to publically practice their faith and to join in public debates on the issues of the day. We support legal protections - for both persons and organizations - from overly broad or unnecessarily coercive state or federal mandates that impinge on religious freedom. We support the religious rights of medical professionals, students, persons living in institutional settings, those confined to prison or anyone who faces unique challenges to the exercise of his or her religion.

The **California Catholic Conference** is the public policy office for the Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, the Archbishop of the Archdiocese of San Francisco and the Bishops of the Dioceses of Fresno, Monterey, Oakland, Orange, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Jose, Santa Rosa and Stockton.



**AS CATHOLICS REPRESENTING OUR CHURCH,** we at the California Catholic Conference seek the common good, believing that the shaping of public policy is not simply a task for others.

**WE EMPLOY THE PRINCIPLES OF CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING** in order to do our part in strengthening public life and building a better society.

**OUR CHURCH IS MADE UP OF MORE OVER 12.7 MILLION CATHOLICS** in California representing 33 percent of the entire population of the state.

They belong to 1,064 parishes located in 12 (arch) dioceses.

They are served by 3,408 priests, 363 Brothers, 3,605 Sisters, 19 active Bishops, two Archbishops, one retired Cardinal, and 18 retired Bishops

**THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IS THE LARGEST PRIVATE PROVIDER OF HEALTHCARE, SOCIAL SERVICES AND EDUCATION IN CALIFORNIA.**

**Among the providers are:**

- 38 Catholic hospitals: Serving over 5.7 million patients; and 16 Catholic Health Care Centers: Serving 321,653 patients
- 12 Catholic colleges and universities: Serving over 47,414 students
- 117 Catholic high schools: Serving 68,167 students
- 537 Catholic elementary schools: Serving 132,683 students
- 99 Social Service Centers: Serving 5,511,542 people

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