



88th Legislative Session Agenda

Life and Family Life: Human life is intrinsically valuable and should be protected by law from conception, which happens at fertilization, to natural death. Moreover, the natural family is the sanctuary of life in which parents teach children how they ought to live. The TCCB opposes direct threats to innocent human life, from conception to natural death, and seeks to promote strong, stable, and healthy families by:

- opposing abortion and euthanasia;
- supporting the elimination of all funding for abortion providers;
- supporting funding to abortion alternatives and support for expectant mothers;
- supporting proposals that recognize the sacredness, fidelity, and permanency of marriage;
- supporting continued improvements to the foster care system which respect subsidiarity through a community-based model;
- supporting increased recruitment, formation, and support of foster, adoptive, and biological parents;
- supporting creating a standby guardianship process to better support parental planning for potential guardianship needs;
- opposing the advancement of gender ideology, especially in places where young people are affected; and
- supporting reasonable measures to address gun related homicides and suicides.

Immigration: Catholics derive special concern for immigrants from the call in Sacred Scripture and Tradition for us to welcome the stranger in search of security and livelihood that they cannot find in their home countries. The TCCB supports immigration reform that is merciful, charitable, and compassionate to those here simply working for a better life, while also recognizing the legitimate responsibility of the government to maintain control of our nation's borders by:

- opposing efforts to reduce access by immigrants to IDs, birth certificates, drivers' licenses, education, and healthcare;
- supporting care for unaccompanied minors, juvenile immigrants, and alternatives to family detention;
- supporting enforcement measures which are targeted, proportional, and humane; and
- supporting the reunification of immigrant families.

Restorative Justice: The state has primary responsibility to uphold justice, with the goals of achieving restitution, protecting the common good, deterring offenses, and rehabilitating offenders. However, our state struggles with overincarceration and overcriminalization. The TCCB supports criminal justice reform that provides for compassionate treatment of prisoners,

responds to the needs of victims of crime, and encourages rehabilitation and forgiveness for those re-entering society by:

- opposing the imposition and use of the death penalty;
- supporting bail reforms which depend upon the accused's danger, not their wealth;
- supporting rehabilitation of offenders who commit non-violent state jail felonies;
- supporting raising the age of criminal responsibility;
- supporting reentry of the incarcerated into society; and
- supporting parole board review of lengthy sentences given to juveniles.

Education: Parents are the primary and principal educators of their children and therefore must be free to determine the best educational environment for their children. To ensure quality educational choices for all families, Texas should respect the independence and autonomy of private and religious schools while also fostering strong public school options. The TCCB supports increasing educational opportunities, especially for the poor and children with special needs, and recognizes the fundamental right of parents to direct their children's education by:

- supporting parental choice in education;
- supporting parents' rights as the primary educators of their children, especially regarding sexuality education;
- supporting continued improvements to student safety and protection;
- supporting increased funding for tuition equalization grants;
- supporting the protection of the autonomy of private education institutions; and
- supporting access to Pre-Kindergarten, and before- or after-school childcare.

Healthcare: Healthcare is an essential component of protecting the sanctity of life and promoting human dignity. The Church teaches that we must especially care for vulnerable members of society, including the unborn, the poor, persons with disabilities and mental health issues, children, and the elderly. The TCCB supports equitable access to healthcare that is oriented toward the dignity of the whole person, made in the image and likeness of God by:

- supporting healthcare which respects patient dignity and physician conscience;
- supporting access to palliative care and improvements to the advance directive act ethics committee dispute resolution process;
- supporting increased access to health insurance and healthcare, such as through Medicaid and CHIP;
- supporting efforts to improve the health of Texas mothers;
- supporting preventative care and enhanced health education to help patients play a greater role in their health; and
- supporting increased access to mental health services, including prevention and treatment for addiction and suicide.

Social Concerns: Jesus Christ willingly took upon our humanity and identified himself with the marginalized and forgotten. As Christians, we are obliged to care for our neighbors who experience poverty in its various forms. The Church provides for the poor and the vulnerable in our charitable ministries. Justice demands that we also prioritize the poor and vulnerable when addressing social and economic needs through public policy, including by adequately funding essential public services. The TCCB seeks to assist those who are in the greatest need by:

- opposing usurious loans, especially payday and auto-title lending;
- supporting anti-poverty public assistance which incentivizes self-sufficiency;
- supporting efforts to assist in the care and support of persons with disabilities;
- supporting efforts to alleviate food insecurity and hunger; and
- supporting efforts to combat human trafficking, care for victims, and reunify families.

Religious Liberty: The Church feeds the hungry, accompanies the lonely, comforts the sick and dying, helps the addicted, gives aid to widows and orphans, shelters refugees, softens earthly justice with divine mercy, and instills the morality necessary for human flourishing. Yet today, religious liberty is under attack. Such liberty is not only about our ability to worship by going to Mass on Sunday or praying the Rosary at home. Rather, it is about whether Christians can make our contribution to the common good of all Americans. The TCCB seeks to maintain and protect religious liberty by:

- supporting efforts to protect religious liberty, especially as it pertains to human life, marriage, and the family;
- supporting conscience protection for individuals and organizations contracting with governments, especially healthcare providers, educators, and those who serve the poor and vulnerable; and
- supporting incentives for charitable giving by taxpayers to programs maintained by faith-based nonprofit entities.

Creation: In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. He entrusted the earth and its resources to the stewardship of humanity to take care of them, master them by labor, and enjoy their fruits. The Church promotes an integral ecology that calls us to receive creation as a gift, recognize the interrelatedness between the good of the human person and of the environment, and to be prudent stewards of our common home, so that generations to come may also enjoy its bounty by:

- supporting efficiency and conservation in water use to maintain availability for irrigation and drinking;
- supporting transparency and community engagement in environmental planning and regulation;
- supporting efficiency in disaster recovery coordination among non-profits; and
- supporting efficiency and conservation in energy use and efforts to mitigate pollution.