

Roman Catholic Diocese of Boise and Catholic Charities of Idaho Public Policy Summary 2010

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Guided by the moral principles of our church’s social teaching, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Boise and Catholic Charities of Idaho believe every policy and political platform should be measured by how it impacts the human person; whether it enhances or diminishes human life, dignity, and human rights; and how it advances the common good. Because of this, we seek to call forth and engage people in transforming social structures that perpetuate injustice and poverty, which in turn, threaten family life and community wellbeing.



“In the Catholic tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue; participation in the political process is a moral obligation. Every believer is called to faithful citizenship, to become an informed, active, and responsible participant in the political process.” (Faithful Citizenship: Civic Responsibility for a New Millennium, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, p. 9)



“Beyond the responsibilities of every Catholic, the Church as an institution also has a role in the political order. This includes educating its members about Catholic social teaching, highlighting the moral dimensions of public policy, participating in debate on matters affecting the common good, and witnessing to the Gospel through the many services and ministries provided by the Catholic community. . . . The leaders of the Church have the right and duty to share the Church’s teaching and to educate Catholics on the moral dimensions of public life, so that they may form their consciences in light of their faith.” (Faithful Citizenship: Civic Responsibility for a New Millennium, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, p. 12)



CCI Poverty Campaign Issues

Positions

<h3>HOUSING</h3>	<p><u>About the Issue:</u> The recent economic downturn has led to rapidly increasing unemployment rates. Many families are experiencing financial difficulties and are being forced to foreclose on their homes, default on loans, and find alternative housing. The housing crisis is affecting families across the economic spectrum, but escalating housing expenses are especially troublesome for low-income families who must cut already tight budgets and make difficult choices between the purchase of adequate healthcare, food, and housing. Too often, the sacrifice made is a direct threat to the family's health and livelihood.</p> <p><u>Catholic Position:</u> The Church's teaching on the dignity of the human person and the value of the family directly relates to safe, decent and affordable housing. Every individual and every family has a right to necessary life resources including adequate shelter. It is the responsibility of society to ensure that the right each citizen has to safe, decent and affordable housing is preserved and defended at every level on the housing continuum from homeless shelters to inexpensive housing development.</p>
<p>H0435 – Homeless Shelter Tax Exemption (Rep. Durst)</p>	<p><u>Summary:</u> <i>Supported;</i> This legislation modifies Section 6336220 Idaho Code to provide nonprofit homeless shelters in Idaho a sales tax exemption beginning July 1, 2010 and ending June 30, 2012.</p> <p><u>Outcome:</u> <i>Did not pass;</i> Unanimously passed the House Revenue & Taxation Committee and House Floor, but did not pass in the Senate Local Government & Taxation Committee (debate was on the subject of tax exemptions).</p>
<p>S1380 – Public Housing Protection Act (Sen. McGee)</p>	<p><u>Summary:</u> <i>Opposed;</i> The purpose of this legislation to give a public housing provider the tools to evict a tenant for cause when the tenant, guest or family member violates the public housing provider's requirement to maintain the public housing premises in a decent, safe and sanitary condition. Under this legislation, any tenant may be evicted who is a health and safety risk to other tenants residing in the immediate vicinity, commits a crime or knowingly provides the public housing owner with false information as described in the legislation.</p> <p><u>Outcome:</u> <i>Did not receive a committee hearing;</i> Pulled by Sen. McGee</p>

<p>H0581 – Mobile Home Park Landlord Tenant Act (Rep. King)</p>	<p>Summary: <i>Supported;</i> The purpose of this legislation is to limit any rule change restricting the type or size of a tenant’s mobile home that is permitted in the park if the mobile home was in compliance with the park rules prior to the adoption or amendment of rule.</p>
	<p>Outcome: <i>Passed House but did not receive a committee hearing in the Senate.</i></p>
<p>HUNGER</p>	<p>About the Issue: Our society has the resources to provide food to every citizen, yet one in six people in Idaho is food insecure or hungry. Faced with low wages and rising housing, utility, and healthcare costs, low-income families are being forced to cut meals or buy food that does not meet the recommended daily intake of nutrition in order to get by; the recent economic downturn is only aggravating this trend. Children suffer the effects of hunger in Idaho in larger proportions than adults, rendering them susceptible to a host of health, psychological, and social risks. Programs such as the National School Lunch Program and the Picnic in the Park Program are helping to provide nutritious meals to kids, but too many children still go to bed hungry every night.</p> <p>Catholic Position: The Church’s teaching on the dignity of the human person and the value of the family directly relates to the commitment to ensure that every individual experiences nutritional and food security. We have a responsibility to make certain that the rights of every individual are preserved and defended, and one of the most basic human rights is the right to adequate food and water. Children and seniors are particularly at risk of being hungry, and we are called to protect their basic needs.</p>
<p>Food Stamp Asset Test Removal Rule Change</p>	<p>Summary: <i>Supported;</i> This rule eliminated the food stamp asset test for the fiscal year 2009-2010. Under former rules, any asset (i.e., home, vehicle, farm equipment) disqualified an applicant for food stamps. Under the current rule, those assets are not counted in the application. Only income is considered.</p>
	<p>Outcome: <i>Passed;</i> Unanimously passed House and Senate Health & Welfare Committees. Gov. Otter has now made the asset test waiver permanent from May 2010 to May 2011.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">HEALTHCARE</p>	<p><u>About the Issue:</u> The current healthcare system in the United States has multiple systemic problems including rising costs of care, limited accessibility to care, lack of adequate insurance coverage, and a growing population of those who are uninsured. As the economy continues to worsen and unemployment rates continue to rise, more families are finding themselves without healthcare. The cost of quality healthcare coverage has increased at an alarming pace over the last decade, and working families have experienced higher deductibles, higher co-payments, and higher costs of services not covered in their insurance plan. While being uninsured creates a burden on the person who lacks health insurance, it also impacts the service delivery system and the community of insured individuals who often pay higher premiums to offset the cost of those who cannot afford to pay for treatment.</p> <p><u>Catholic Position:</u> The belief in the transcendent dignity of every human person is the driving factor that promotes the protection of basic human rights, including the right to equitable and affordable healthcare. Church teachings emphasize the significance of protecting the life and well-being of every person, and special attention must be given to the health needs of the poor and marginalized. We have a moral duty to ensure that all members of our community have access to quality healthcare.</p>
<p>H0635 – Pregnant Prisoners Restraint (Rep. McGeachin)</p>	<p><u>Summary:</u> <i>Supported;</i> This legislation would prohibit the use of restraints on pregnant female prisoners during labor except under certain conditions. The intent of the legislation would be to protect the State of Idaho by implementing a policy which conforms to a recent Supreme Court decision stating that the use of restraints on pregnant female prisoners during labor is considered cruel and unusual punishment.</p> <p><u>Outcome:</u> <i>Did not receive a committee hearing;</i> Pulled by Rep. McGeachin</p>
<p>S1353– Freedom of Conscience for Health Care Providers (Sen. Winder)</p>	<p><u>Summary:</u> <i>Supported;</i> Legislation provides health care providers with employment protection when exercising their conscience in refusing to provide health care that is contrary to their personal beliefs. Legislation requires that another health care provider must be immediately available and able to provide care and, in emergency circumstances, care of the patient must be provided until such time that the patient stabilizes or another health care provider becomes available. This legislation DOES NOT trump the patient’s autonomy in health care because of the above stated</p>

	obligations.
	<u>Outcome:</u> Bill was signed into law by Gov. Otter.
ECONOMIC SECURITY	<p><u>About the Issue:</u> The recent economic downturn has led to rapidly increasing unemployment and underemployment rates. More families are facing financial difficulties with many turning to the state for financial assistance through government programs such as Unemployment and Food Stamps (now entitled the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program). Foreclosure and bankruptcy rates are at extreme highs, and families are struggling to pay for necessities, often having to make difficult choices between adequate healthcare, nutritious food, and paying bills. Workers are being forced to take pay cuts, accept jobs that do not pay a living wage (meaning a wage that sustains a decent standard of living without government assistance), and thus give up their economic security.</p> <p><u>Catholic Position:</u> Families are essential units in our society. Poverty threatens not only the dignity of life and the ability to meet basic human needs, but family well-being as well. The economic security of families must be promoted and strengthened, and every individual should be granted the opportunity to adequately provide for themselves and for their family. Church teachings emphasize our responsibility to protect the rights to work for a just wage under safe conditions in addition to preserving and defending the basic human rights of every individual and family.</p>
H0547 – Women’s Equal Pay Day (Rep. Pasley-Stuart)	<p><u>Summary:</u> <i>Supported;</i> This bill is to acknowledge that pay disparity in Idaho is genuine and to reaffirm that women deserve equal pay for equal work, and to demonstrate that Idaho families will benefit greatly by closing the pay gap. This bill also calls for an annual day to be proclaimed as Equal Pay Day.</p> <p><u>Outcome:</u> <i>Did not receive a committee hearing;</i> Chairman Rep. Loertscher would not put the proposal on the House State Affairs Committee agenda</p>
H0610 – Child Protective Act	<u>Summary:</u> <i>Supported;</i> The bill clarifies definitions and adds new sections authorizing the

(Rep. Block)	<p>Department of Health & Welfare, consistent with the best interests and special needs of the child, to consider placement priority and an expedited placement with a fit and willing relative.</p> <p>Outcome: <i>Passed</i>; Unanimously passed House Health & Welfare Committee, House Floor, Senate Health & Welfare Committee, and Senate Floor</p>
<p>JUSTICE FOR IMMIGRANTS</p>	<p>About the Issue: Our current immigration system is broken and ineffective. The economic and political motivations that compel immigrants to risk unauthorized entry into America are varied, but family reunification, a need to work, and a desire to provide monetary support for family are often the driving factors for immigrants entering the U.S. Almost two-thirds of all undocumented families have children who are U.S. citizens by birth. When parents or other family members are unexpectedly taken away, children are left to suffer not only from trauma but from the loss of their support system and economic security as well. Understanding the need for reform, we seek to reduce the number of disrupted lives and communities in Idaho by supporting just and fair comprehensive immigration policies that address the needs of newcomers as well as the security and economic health of our nation.</p> <p>Catholic Position: Immigration, while a political issue, is a fundamental moral issue which impacts human life and dignity. The Church’s teaching on the dignity of the human person and the value of life directly relates to the commitment that every individual’s basic human rights are met, regardless of citizenship status. Citizenship does not grant basic human rights, personhood does. We have a responsibility to protect, support, and encourage the family unit for the basic well-being of the entire society, and we seek to promote family stability and end immigration enforcement practices that violate the dignity of the human person, separate families, and lead to exploitations and abuse.</p>
<p>H0497 – Unauthorized Aliens (Rep. Hart)</p>	<p>Summary: <i>Opposed</i>; Amends and adds to existing law relating to employment of unauthorized aliens to prohibit employment of unauthorized aliens, to provide provisions relating to the filing and investigation of a complaint; and to provide provisions relating to notice from the State Tax Commission to certain employers.</p> <p>Outcome: <i>Did not pass</i>; Held in House State Affairs Committee</p>

<p>S1271 – Employment/False Impersonation (Sen. McGee)</p>	<p>Summary: <i>Opposed</i>; This legislation prohibits the manufacturing of false identification and the use of false identification by all persons to obtain employment and provides criminal sanctions for employers who knowingly employ persons using false identification. Using forged documentation to gain employment becomes a felony with a maximum of 14 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.</p>
	<p>Outcome: <i>Did not pass</i>; Senate State Affairs Committee sent to 14th Order on Senate Floor to be amended and no action taken</p>
<p>S1303 – Employment of Unauthorized Aliens (Sen. Jorgenson)</p>	<p>Summary: <i>Opposed</i>; This legislation defines, prohibits and classifies as a felony the trafficking and harboring of illegal aliens by individuals and employers, the penalties of which range from a fine of \$1,000.00 and 1 year imprisonment to twenty years imprisonment where the crime causes serious bodily injury or placed the life of any person in jeopardy. *Humanitarian aid, non-profits, and churches are not excluded from this law.</p> <p>This legislation also would compel the written portion of the test required to obtain an Idaho state drivers license to be administered solely in the English language without benefit of translators.</p> <p>This legislation makes the E Verify online computer program operated by the Department of Homeland Security mandatory for use by all Idaho employers during the hiring process of all new employees.</p> <p>The legislation defines a "Sanctuary City" as a city that does not enforce the provisions of this legislation. Any city determined to be a "Sanctuary City" will be ineligible to receive moneys provided through grants administered by the state.</p>
	<p>Outcome: <i>Did not pass</i>; held in Senate State Affairs Committee</p>