



LOUISIANA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

2021 LEGISLATURE - MID-SESSION REVIEW

MAY 21, 2021

The Louisiana Conference of Catholic Bishops evaluates legislation in light of gospel values. "The church's obligation to participate in shaping the moral character of society is a requirement of our faith....because we are people of both faith and reason, it is appropriate and necessary for us to bring this essential truth about human life and dignity to the public square."

(Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, USCCB)

OVERVIEW - LCCB continued to advocate for legislation that promoted the Life and Dignity of the Human Person and the Common Good. Although this is a tax reform session many of the tax proposals that would impact the Catholic Church have been temporarily deferred until later in the session. Several of the bills below have made it out of committees and are now on the House and Senate floors for debate.

ABORTION MITIGATION RELATED

- **HB 37** (Rep. Crews) to ensure that minors do not use a process called judicial by-pass without informing parents is moving. In some cases, minors were going directly to the judge to consent to an abortion without parental consent. **(Support)**
- **HB 432** (Rep. Emerson) will continue to promote the collection of more information on abortions especially thirteen years of age and with zip codes. **(Support)**

IMPROVING ADOPTION RELATED

- **HB 37** (Rep. Bacala) bill is in its final stages and will improve the post placement services and will require attorneys to align better with the process that licensed non-profits are required to perform. **(Support)**
- **HB 54** (Rep. Edmonds) has passed the House and now in Senate Committee and will create the crime of adoption deception. Staff at Catholic Charities continued to make amendments to ensure that this does not deter adoptions. **(Support)**

EDUCATION

- The current **HB 1** Appropriations Bill continues to include all funding for the Scholarship Program, Required Services and School Lunch Salary Supplements. **(Support)**
- **HB 280** (Rep. Edmonds) relating to the Scholarship Program moved out of Committee; it removed the cap on enrollment; set three-year consecutive thresholds for low performing schools before discontinuing funding. **(Support)**
- **HB 528** (Rep. Garofalo) for a pilot program to test a balanced school year calendar in certain public schools passed out of Committee. **(Monitor)**
- **HB 556** (Rep. DeVilliere) relating to non-public school Educational Saving Account for Foster Care and Military families; Creates a tuition counseling and tutoring account with DOE according to MFP of \$4,000 per student. **(Support)**

FAMILY LIFE

- **HB 7** (Rep. Hilferty) will provide a tax credit for feminine hygiene and diaper products. **(Support)**
- **HB 117** (Rep. Echols) and **HG 314** (Rep. Wright) to create tax credits for foster care families were voluntarily deferred and may not be taken up this session. **(Support)**
- **HB 660** (Rep. Hughes) applies to essential workers, many low wage, that could not take advantage of child care tax credits since they were childless would now be eligible. **(Support)**

INSTITUTIONAL

- **HB 242** (Rep. Miller) establishes the Commission on Security in the Faith Community which would allow congregations the ability to apply for funding for security upgrades passed out of Committee. **(Support)**

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

- **HB 32** (Rep. Selders) will increase good time for inmates who attain college degrees and is moving quickly through both houses. **(Support)**
- **HB 67** (Rep. Landry) to prohibit solitary confinement for those with mental illness is reset for Committee hearing this week. **(Support)**
- **HB 325** (Rep. Lavardain) requires guidelines for training of law enforcement to ensure safety of children when their parent or guardian has been arrested. **(Testimony/Support)**
- **SB 170** (Senator Johns) regarding creation of the Office of Human Trafficking has passed the Senate and now in the House for consideration. **(Testimony/Support)**

GUN CONTROL

- **SB 118** (Rep. Morris) to allow for concealed carry without a permit for those 21 and older with no criminal record made it out of Senate and passed House Criminal Justice Committee. The LCCB opposes this bill and provided testimony in House committee. **(Testimony/Oppose)**

ENVIRONMENT

- **SB 44** (Senator Peterson) improved the reporting of toxic releases to communities that warrant emergency notification for increased safety reported favorably out of committee. **(Support)**
- **SB 129** (Senator Mills) to provide critically needed improvement in rural water systems has passed Senate and now in House for consideration. **(Support)**

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