



NEWS RELEASE

CALIFORNIA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

CALIFORNIA BISHOPS SUPPORT LIFE AND FAMILY INITIATIVES

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Due to the convergence of two initiatives whose sponsors are seeking their placement on California's November 2012 ballot, we Catholic bishops have been presented a unique teaching moment on life and family.

As Catholics, we believe and teach that we bear the image of God. We come to life as the result of humanity's collaboration in God's creative work. Ordinarily, each child is the result of the loving union of a man and woman who have formed a family. The family then cradles the newborn, raises up the child and guides the young person's development to adulthood. As citizens, we believe that government serves best when it supports families in their irreplaceable task of nurturing the next generation.

We therefore wish to express our support for the *Parental Notification Initiative*, which would require a young girl aged 12-17 to include her parents in a decision to secure an abortion. Because current law allows secrecy for "confidential medical services" a young girl could have multiple abortions—at state expense—without her parents' knowledge. Not only are her parents still responsible for her medical and emotional needs if she suffers complications from the abortion, but current policy denies them accurate information as to how best to care for her. The relationship between that girl and her parents will be forever altered because of her secret.

As Catholics we hold human life as sacred. In the exercise of justice, this principle must prevail in the manner we treat one another, even for those who have done grave harm. Justice requires proportionate and effective means in the protection of society. As citizens, we find the use of the death penalty unnecessary, impractical and expensive.

Therefore, we also offer our support for the second of the initiatives— labeled *SAFE California* by its sponsors— which would offer Savings, Accountability and Full Enforcement by replacing the expensive death penalty for a capital offense with a sentence of life imprisonment without the possibility of parole. We have long held that the use of the death penalty is no longer necessary to protect the community.

These two initiatives have appeared at the same time on the political landscape and bring into sharp focus important moral issues, namely our society's treatment of nascent life, family life and even a sinful or errant life. In keeping with our fundamental principles, we believe that social policy should respect and support the role of parents in caring for their children. Justice should uphold human dignity as it protects the community.

For these reasons, we, the Catholic bishops of California, support both initiatives as responsible efforts to bring common sense, compassion and prudent justice into California's public policy.

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