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**Michigan Catholic Conference  
Announces ‘Catholic Action Plan’ to  
Assist S.T.T.O.P. Coalition**  
*Over 800 Parishes Participating in “People’s Override”  
Campaign to End Partial-Birth Abortion*

**LANSING** – In an effort to override the governor’s veto of the Legal Birth Definition Act, the Michigan Catholic Conference today announced at a news conference its support of the “People’s Override” campaign and a “Catholic Action Plan” to end partial-birth abortion in Michigan.

“The Michigan Catholic Conference, along with the over 800 Catholic parishes across the state, stands ready and willing to devote our entire efforts toward enacting this initiative and ending the abhorrent procedure known as partial-birth abortion,” said Sister Monica Kostielney, R.S.M, Michigan Catholic Conference president and C.E.O. “The Michigan Catholic Conference has implemented an action plan that will assist the S.T.T.O.P. coalition to ensure the necessary number of signatures are collected to put the Legal Birth Definition Act back before the Legislature.”

The “Catholic Action Plan” involves all 802 Catholic parishes across the state designating a contact person in each parish to monitor signature collection. The plan then calls for that contact person to choose one or several weekends to collect signatures from fellow parishioners. Parish contacts have attended training sessions organized by Right to Life of Michigan to learn how to properly collect the necessary 254,206 signatures of registered voters.

The Legal Birth Definition Act, which defines legal birth and is intended to outlaw partial-birth abortion, overwhelmingly passed the Michigan Legislature last year with 74 votes in the House of Representatives and 25 votes in the Michigan Senate.

Despite the near two-thirds majority of votes in the Legislature, Governor Granholm vetoed Senate Bill 395, citing that ‘the bill does not contain a clear exception for the life and health of the mother.’ Yet language written into the bill clearly and obviously provides for such an exception. According to SB 395:

**(b) If in that physician's reasonable medical judgment and in compliance with the applicable standard of practice and care, the procedure was necessary in either of the following circumstances:**

**(OVER)**

**(i) To save the life of the mother and every reasonable effort was made to preserve the life of both the mother and the perinate.**

**(ii) To avert an imminent threat to the physical health of the mother, and any harm to the perinate was incidental to treating the mother and not a known or intended result of the procedure performed.**

“As pro-life organizations we are always committed to protecting the life of all people – especially women,” said Sister Monica. “Women deserve better than for the state to allow heinous partial-birth abortions.”

The S.T.T.O.P. (Standing Together to Oppose Partial-birth Abortion) coalition, which includes the Michigan Catholic Conference, Right to Life of Michigan and the Knights of Columbus, along with several other pro-life and religious denominations and organizations, received an additional vote of confidence on December 17, 2003 when the United States Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals, which includes Michigan, set precedent by upholding the State of Ohio’s ban on partial-birth abortion.

“The federal courts have set precedent for the future defense of such necessary and life-saving legislation, which is wonderful news for the State of Michigan and the “People’s Override” campaign,” said Sister Monica.

The Michigan Catholic Conference and Right to Life of Michigan have joined efforts on two previous citizen initiatives regarding abortion. In 1987 the two pro-life organizations worked to defeat Medicaid funding of abortion - and in 1990 again joined forces to establish parental consent laws giving parents control of their minors’ health decisions.

“There is no doubt in my mind that the S.T.T.O.P. coalition will run a successful campaign to put the Legal Birth Definition Act back before the Legislature,” said Sen. Michelle McManus (R-Lake Leelanau), sponsor of the Legal Birth Definition Act.

There are approximately 2.25 million Catholics in the State of Michigan. The Michigan Catholic Conference, located at [www.micatholicconference.org](http://www.micatholicconference.org), is the public policy voice for the Catholic Church in this state.