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Contact: Kristen Hemker
517-881-0125

Michigan Catholic Conference Denounces Parental Consent Veto
Rejection of Reasonable Life Issues Now a Pattern for Administration

LANSING – The Michigan Catholic Conference (MCC) today announced its indignation with Governor Granholm’s veto of legislation intended to support Michigan’s parental consent laws and further protect Michigan’s citizens. House Bill 4478, sponsored by democratic state Rep. Bill O’Neil, represents the second straight piece of practical life legislation that has been vetoed by the executive office.

“Despite the Governor’s veto message, House Bill 4478 does not alter Michigan’s parental consent law requiring the court to report all cases of child sexual abuse nor does it alter Michigan’s Child Protection Law,” said Sister Monica Kostielney, R.S.M., MCC president and C.E.O. “House Bill 4478 passed overwhelmingly in a bipartisan fashion. Today’s veto makes it evident that this administration will continue to distance itself from any sort of sound and sensible legislation that addresses the life issue.”

HB 4478, which nearly passed the Legislature by an override majority vote, was cited as necessary by numerous county judges who witnessed first-hand minors “judge-shopping” for a parental consent waiver. The legislation vetoed by the governor would have required a minor to take her case to an appeals court rather than “shop” for a judge who would approve a previously denied waiver.

“Just as a counsel is not allowed to take a defeated case to a separate jurisdiction, this legislation requires the appeals process to work as in any other court case and is intended to uphold the value of the judicial process,” said Sister Monica. “It is appalling that an attorney would veto legislation intended to prevent the practice of judge-shopping.”

The veto of House Bill 4478 comes nearly three months after the governor vetoed the Legal Birth Definition Act, legislation that also just fell short of a two-thirds majority vote in the Legislature. The Michigan Catholic Conference and all 802 Catholic parishes across the state are currently assisting the S.T.T.O.P. (Standing Together to Oppose Partial-birth Abortion) coalition to override the Legal Birth veto and end heinous partial-birth abortions in Michigan.

“The promotion and protection of life is at the very heart of the Michigan Catholic Conference and is the number issue for which the Conference will advocate,” said Sister Monica.

In 1990 the Michigan Catholic Conference and Right to Life of Michigan joined efforts to successfully coordinate a citizens initiative that put the state’s parental consent laws in the books. The law is still praised as essential to ensuring parental involvement in minors’ health decisions.

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In fact, according to the Department of Community Health, since the law's enactment the abortion rate of Michigan minors has decreased by over 40 percent. At the same time the state has witnessed a consistent decrease in the number of teenage mothers.

The Michigan Catholic Conference is the public policy voice for the Catholic Church in this state.

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