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## **Michigan Catholic Conference Ready to Oppose Death Penalty Resolution**

*MCC Stands Against Use of Lethal Means to Solve Social Issues*

**LANSING** – The Michigan Catholic Conference today announced its resounding opposition to a proposed constitutional amendment that would reinstate the death penalty in Michigan. On the issue of capital punishment, as with abortion or assisted suicide, the Catholic Church has consistently advocated against the use of lethal means to solve social issues.

“The Michigan Catholic Conference stands unequivocally against any measure that seeks to reinstate the death penalty in our state, and will vigorously oppose legislation that attempts to establish a culture of death in Michigan,” said Paul A. Long, MCC Vice-President for Public Policy. “We do not challenge society’s right to punish the serious and violent offender. But, to serve as an effective deterrent to crime, any punishment must be swift, sure and even handed. Capital punishment fails in all these categories.”

The proposed legislation comes in response to two Detroit police officers who were tragically gunned down during a routine traffic stop recently. The proposed legislation again brings capital punishment to the public after a similar resolution, introduced by the same legislator, was soundly defeated in 1999. The legislation failed to receive even one-third of the vote in the House of Representatives, let alone the two-thirds necessary for passage.

On March 3, 1999 the Michigan Catholic Conference Board of Directors, which includes the seven Catholic diocesan bishops, released a statement on the issue of capital punishment. That statement reads, in part: “We believe that a principled and consistent rejection of death-dealing as a policy instrument is required to uphold the dignity of human persons and the value of human life. Such a position does not ignore the reality of human sinfulness in the world; on the contrary, we recognize that, given human sinfulness and selective compassion, lethal means will appeal to some people as a solution to one or another social problem, be it those of unwanted pregnancies, burdensome patients or remorseless killers.”

“Michigan has a long and proud tradition of standing for life in all stages,” said Long. “It is the hope of the Michigan Catholic Conference that the Michigan Legislature will not step away from this tradition by voting for state-sanctioned killing as has been proposed.”

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

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