

Cardinal Adam Maida, archbishop of Detroit, presents this open letter as Chairman of the Michigan Catholic Conference, the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Michigan.

We're All In This Together

TO THE CITIZENS AND ELECTED OFFICIALS OF THE STATE OF MICHIGAN:

We're all in this together. With those words, our governor comforted and summoned hundreds of thousands of us affected by mid-August's massive power grid failure. The situation called for people of good will to extend themselves to their neighbors, giving special attention to those most vulnerable. Legislation now under consideration here in Michigan should prompt a similar response from us—a recognition of our connectedness to each other, our need to absolutely protect newborn children, those whose voices have yet to be heard. The bill is the **Legal Birth Definition Act**. It deserves to become the law of our state.

The Michigan Catholic Conference has been promoting sound public policy for 40 years. We bring our voice to the public square not to discuss theology, but to promote the common good on a wide range of contemporary issues. Certainly, believers and non-believers alike can agree that our state has a compelling interest in protecting the life of a born person. The **Legal Birth Definition Act** secures those rights, declaring that a partially born child is legally born, while providing for the life and physical health of the mother. Our nation's Declaration of Independence states that every person is endowed "... with certain unalienable rights... Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." The first of these rights is the right to life itself; without that fundamental right, no other opportunities can follow.

Michigan has a long and respected history of dealing with legal questions involving life... and death. Over a hundred and fifty years ago, we were courageous in outlawing the death penalty, the first state in the union to do so. In more recent times, the voters overwhelmingly rejected efforts to legalize physician-assisted suicide.

The question before us today is life... life itself. Without a determination of when a child is legally born, every partially born child in Michigan is at risk. *We're all in this together...* including and especially our newest and most vulnerable citizens, our newborn children.

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Respectfully submitted,
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