

FLORIDA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

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MICHAEL B. SHEEDY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



March 12, 2025

The Hon. Berny Jacques
313 House Office Building
402 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

Re: Opposition to HB 1283

Dear Representative Jacques:

We write to express our opposition to HB 1283 that would make sex trafficking of children under 12 or of the mentally incapacitated a capital felony.

We naturally concur that all forms of human trafficking are gravely evil, especially those which afflict the most vulnerable. We affirm also that the government has a duty to prevent such crimes, to punish the offender, and to protect the public.

Notwithstanding questions of the constitutionality of the proposal, there are strong reasons to conclude that killing the offender is not a just solution. The dignity of the perpetrator is not lost even after the commission of the most serious crimes. Society is protected and those who commit capital crimes are severely punished through the alternative sentence of life without parole.

As is increasingly recognized, seeking death is costlier to taxpayers than a life sentence without parole because of trial costs and the necessary appeals before the state can deprive someone of life. Further, where the death penalty has been handed down, it often delays reaching a sense of closure for the families and friends of victims of these heinous crimes as appeals wear on.

We would welcome the opportunity to speak with you about these concerns. Thank you for your generous service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Michael B. Sheedy". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Michael B. Sheedy

cc: Most Rev. Thomas G. Wenski, Archbishop of Miami and FCCB President