

# **New Mexico Conference of Bishops 2011 Legislative Report**

By Allen Sanchez, NMCCB Executive Director

Sometimes a win is a win;  
Sometimes a failure is a win;  
Sometimes a failure is a failure.

Sounds like classical deductive logic, but does it make sense? The Bishops of New Mexico were looking for wins in prolife legislation. Unfortunately, no proposed legislation to protect unborn life of a person will become law this year. Many attempts to organize a maneuver to move parental notification to a vote of the full Senate and full House of Representatives never materialized despite having a majority in both chambers in favor of “parental notification”. Most people are shocked to know that in the State of New Mexico, a 12 or 13 year old girl can be taken off school grounds to an abortion clinic for an abortion and the parents do not have to be notified.

The *unborn victims act* to protect an unborn baby from a violent crime did make it to a full vote of the House and passed 63 to 5. This victory didn’t last long and stalled out in the Senate Judiciary Committee where it never received a hearing. In essence, the clock killed the legislation.

Far too much time was wasted on the repeal of the driver’s license for undocumented immigrants. Valuable time and political capital was lost while maybe “parental notification” could have been passed. The House chose to break a 35 year precedent to “blast” driver’s license legislation out of the Committee when many have been waiting for such action on “parental notification”.

As for the “repeal of driver’s license to undocumented immigrants” the Bishops supported a compromise bill that would have strengthened the current law but both the House and the Governor rejected the compromise. This issue is not black and white but rather has complicated issues of justice and compassion. There is the issue of innocent children who are brought to our country through no fault of their own and are only obeying their parents.

One can learn much more about the Catholic teaching and history on refugees, migration, and immigration by visiting the [USCCB website](#). The US Bishops and the Vatican make reference to scripture as to the treatment of foreigners among us. Jesus reminds us that “what we do unto the least of your brothers you did unto me.”

Legislation Supported by the New Mexico Conference of Bishops

HB 30	<i>Unborn victims of violence act</i> – Passed House of Representatives 63 to 5 but never had final hearing in Senate Judiciary Committee
HB 229	<i>Parental notice of abortion act</i> – Tabled
SB 230	<i>Enact parental notification act</i> – Tabled
HB 179	<i>Pain-capable unborn child protection act</i> – Tabled
SB 222	<i>Pain-capable unborn child protection act</i> – Tabled
SB 239	<i>Prohibit certain late term abortions</i> – Never had a hearing
SJR 10	<i>Land grant permanent fund</i> (funding for pre-natal, infant and toddler programs) – Passed two Committees and never received hearing in Senate Finance Committee
HB 427	<i>Equal opportunity scholarship</i> (tax credit) – Tabled
SB 433	<i>Equal opportunity scholarship</i> (tax credit) – Tabled
SB 144	<i>Require school free breakfast programs</i> – Passed both House of Representatives and Senate, awaiting Governor’s signature

Legislation Opposed by the New Mexico Conference of Bishops

HB 291	<i>Clinic signage</i> (requiring abortion signage in prolife counseling centers) – Tabled (victory)
HJR 6	<i>Imposition of death penalty</i> – Tabled
HB 371	<i>Reinstating the death penalty</i> – Tabled
HB 401	<i>Guest driver’s license permits</i> – Tabled
HB 78	<i>Driver’s license and ID card restrictions</i> – House of Representatives failed to concur with Senate (bill did not become law)