



“2014 Election”

For purposes of adopting official Catholic positions on issues of Oregon public policy the Bishop of Baker and the Archbishop of Portland have long collaborated as members of the Oregon Catholic Conference, which is composed of representatives from both dioceses. For this fall’s election the Catholic Conference recommends a Yes vote on Measure 88, which authorizes the issuance of an Oregon Driver Card—a permit to drive legally and get auto insurance.

The Oregon Driver Card is not a driver’s *license*. It cannot be used to board a plane, to vote, to buy guns, or to get government benefits. Applicants must provide proof of identity and proof of residence in Oregon for more than one year; and they must pass written and behind-the-wheel driver’s tests as well. Making the Oregon Driver Card legally available is an attempt to reduce the number of unlicensed and uninsured motorists and to increase the number of licensed and insured drivers, thereby improving public safety on the open road.

Of course Measure 88 has to do with a more wide-ranging and contentious issue as well: the issue of immigration. The Oregon Driver Card would greatly lessen the anxieties of our neighbors who are here as immigrants without legal authorization. For them, as things stand now, the simple act of driving can result in deportation and the sudden breaking apart of their families. But with the Oregon Driver Card mothers and

fathers could drive their children safely and legally to school, to doctor’s appointments, to family activities, to church and community events without fear of being stopped, separated, and uprooted.

No one proposes mass deportation of the millions here illegally, so it is only realistic to expect that the vast majority will stay; they will be with us far into the future. Would we not do well to make their lives less difficult by diminishing the threat of individual, family-disrupting deportations when common sense measures allow us to do so?

For too long America has been immobilized by divisive differences over immigration. The search for a one-time, definitive resolution has left us unable to move off square one and make any progress in breaking the logjam. Measure 88 would be a small, voter-endorsed step in the direction of much needed reform. It would give all of us a sense that gradual progress is possible, and for many of our neighbors it would remove a debilitating source of anxiety that serves no useful purpose for anyone.

There are legitimate arguments on both sides of this issue, and Catholics are not obliged to vote in lockstep with their bishop on a matter of prudential judgment. Nonetheless I endorse the recommendation of the Oregon Catholic Conference on Measure 88, and I encourage you to give it your careful consideration.