

## “We Cannot Remain Passive Bystanders”

By Most Rev. Ronald W. Gainer  
Catholic Conference of Kentucky  
Annual Health Care Summit  
Closing Comments and Response to Presenters  
November 4, 2009

Bob Castagna’s letter inviting you to participate in today’s conversation promised an “inside the beltway” perspective on national health care reform. I hope you agree that our presenters delivered that and more. In the name of the Kentucky bishops, I thank our “insiders,” Michael Rodgers and John

affordable — even at my pay grade. Creating reform that will give that same advantage to all in our country and protect the life and dignity of all people from the moment of conception until natural death is the desired outcome of the health care reform debate currently engaging our friends on Capitol Hill.

Catholic Health Care providers have an essential role to play in this public policy process. The Church has always sought to embody our Savior’s concern for the sick. The Gospel accounts of Jesus’ ministry draw special attention to His acts of healing and those compassionate acts on the part of our Lord provide the foundation upon which Catholic Health Care ministries have been built.

Today, as we gather here, elected leaders of our nation are formulating dramatic changes in our nation’s health policies. Their efforts and proposals thus far — to the degree that we can understand them — appear disappointing and do not seem to meet the fundamental moral tests that Catholic moral theology must apply to any genuine reform. The much needed health care reform must maintain the long-standing federal protections that restrict abortion funding and mandates, must articulate clear protections for the freedom of conscience for both institutional and individual health care providers and must not be anti-immigrant.

Today, the American health care system stands as an oxymoron. It is neither focused on health, but on sickness; nor is it a system, but rather it is fragmented into proprietary components. Our health care system is in urgent need of reform to conserve resources, to provide affordable needed health care, to correct the injustices of access for the poor, the vulnerable, and the marginalized, and to protect the sanctity of life in all its stages. Health care reform is an urgent priority on our public agenda. But reform without moral and ethical foundations is not acceptable. As Catholics and as health professionals we cannot, must not and will not lend our support to any misguided efforts that contradict binding moral truths.

The Church has a long history of advocacy for morally proper health care reform. Our commitment and involvement is based upon the fact that health care is not a privilege, but a fundamental human right and a moral obligation for a civil society — “...what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me” (Matt. 25:45).

The animated debate over reform is often reduced to a contest of conflicting rights: the right to life of the unborn ver-



Lexington Bishop, Most Rev. Ronald Gainer, spoke at the conclusion of the Catholic Conference of Kentucky Health Summit.

Carr, for their very helpful contributions. Special thanks also to members of our panel for their enlightening responses: Marie Alagia Cull, Mary Haynes, Father Pat Delahanty and Bob Castagna. I also want to thank Ben Wiederholt and members of the CCK Health Care Committee for their hard work in preparing today’s program. Karen Chambers, Father Pat Delahanty and Bob Castagna, we are all grateful to you for making the gathering so informative and flow so well.

I don’t have an “inside the beltway” perspective but, I suspect, that more than anyone else in the room I have the freshest “inside the health care system” perspective — the view from the hospital bed — having been discharged from the hospital after surgery just a week ago today.

Like you, I am among the fortunate for whom the highest quality of health care is exceedingly accessible and practically

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Monday, February 22—Tuesday, February 23, 2010**

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# Lifting Up the Poor People of Kentucky

By Robert J. Castagna  
Executive Director



The faces of poor people leave an indelible impression on one's consciousness and one's soul with the accompanying challenge to understand and to work with the people to address the root causes of poverty.

Led by Glenmary Father John Rausch of Stanton on a two day tour of Eastern Kentucky during September, I encountered poverty in the Commonwealth through meeting with and listening to poor people and the staff of agencies serving their needs. Visits to the Perry-Hazard Community Ministries, Little Flower Health Clinic, the Christian Appalachian Project and Sarah's Place provided opportunities to learn from those serving the poor in Eastern Kentucky and from the poor themselves.

A visit to the home of an elderly woman and her son who benefited from home repairs through the Christian Appalachian Project revealed the face and depth of poverty and the insatiable gratitude of the family who welcomed those generously providing the community's caring concern and repairs.

The signs of poverty were evident in the lawn mowers and parts strewn in the front of the home, a source of work and income. There were memories shared of the solidarity, friendship and human touch of college students on a service project who celebrated the woman's birthday with a surprise party and cake in the midst of their home repair contributions. Grief and mourning were expressed over the recent sudden death of another son in a car collision announced by an insensitive police phone call communicating his passing. There were hugs and smiles exchanged at our departure and the Project's promises of future help to assist this family. Dignity, solidarity, love and compassion for the poor were evidenced in this encounter between beneficiaries and faith-motivated service providers.

The service providers' contributions are essential given the depth of poverty in Kentucky and the dramatic increase in the state poverty rate during the last eight years. (The state poverty rate measures the percentage of the population with incomes below the poverty line, for example, \$21,834 for a family of four with two children.) Compiled by The Center for Poverty Research at the University of Kentucky, one of four federally funded poverty research centers in the United States, the poverty estimates underscore the dramatic escalation, severity and duration of poverty in the Commonwealth.

At the height of the nation's economic expansion in the year 2000, Kentucky ranked as the 18<sup>th</sup> poorest state in the nation, with 12.4% living

below poverty. From 2006 through 2008, Kentucky ranked as the fifth poorest state in the US, with a poverty rate of 16.5%. Kentucky has about 700,000 people living in poverty, nearly one-sixth of the population. Among those living in poverty, and exceeding the state rate of 16.5%, are nearly one-quarter (23%) of Kentucky's children, people with less than a high school education (30%), female-headed families (29%), African-Americans (30%), Hispanics (27%) and persons in rural areas. Compared to other neighboring states and the Appalachian region, Kentucky, particularly Eastern Kentucky, is most severely impacted. Designated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as one of five persistently poor regions in the United States, Eastern Kentucky's poverty rate has exceeded 20% in each national census since 1970.

During the period from 1979 to 2003, Appalachian Kentucky has led the rest of Appalachia in poverty rates compared to Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and the entire Appalachian region. Educationally, over a twenty year period ending in 1999, Appalachian Kentucky trails the Appalachian region with the lowest percentages of high school and college completion.

In the face of this data of unrelenting poverty, the Legislature has created a Poverty Task Force which met for the first time in September, with a total of four meetings planned in anticipation of the 2010 legislative session. It is intended that the Task Force recommend an anti-poverty agenda to the Legislature.

The Catholic Conference of Kentucky has been among those in the advocacy forefront of combating poverty. Capping payday loans at 36%, so that those in need of financial assistance are not victimized by usurious interest rates approaching 400%, is a priority. Tax modernization to create tax credits for the working poor, child care credits, and other tax reform efforts are public policies that can help lift people out of poverty.

A state earned income tax credit (EITC), for example, based on a percentage of the federal EITC, used as an anti-poverty policy tool in 23 states and the District of Columbia, is another Conference priority. It is estimated that a state EITC could help 360,000 working poor individuals.

The effort to lift Kentuckians out of poverty requires support for those social service agencies striving to maintain a safety net for those in need and simultaneously, the combined voices of many in the Commonwealth to advocate for policies to provide for a preferential option for the poor in state laws. The Catholic Conference of Kentucky's Faithful Citizenship Advocacy Network affords that opportunity to advocate for the common good, for the poor people of Kentucky and to live one's faith in the public square.

## Parents Deserve Better Choices for Education

# The Friedman Survey Finds Need for More Choices

By Harry Borders

Milton and Rose D. Friedman established The Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice in 1996. This is a non-partisan, non-profit organization addressing the longstanding concern about the urgent challenges facing America's elementary and secondary education systems.

The Foundation's philosophy asserts that the best way to improve the quality of education is to enable all parents to have unfettered free choice of the schools that their children attend. The Friedman Foundation conducts research to educate the general public and to amplify the call for systemic reform through school choice.

The Kentucky League for Educational Alternatives (KLEA) has known of The Friedman Foundation since 1997 and has



supported their efforts ever since. To date, sixteen (16) states, including Kentucky, asked The Friedman Foundation to poll voters on a variety of subjects and to focus on school choice in order to gauge interest in and readiness for more choices in education.

In March of 2009 the Foundation completed a total of 1,200 phone interviews with likely voters in Kentucky which pro-

- Nearly one-half of Kentuckians favor a tax credit scholarship program.

vides a statistically significant representative sampling for the population in the state. There is a disconnect between what parents want for their children's education setting and what is available to them in Kentucky.

Fifty percent (50%) of K-12 parents said they would like to send their child to a charter school. Yet, the current law in Kentucky does not allow for charter schools.

A scant thirteen percent (13%) of Kentucky parents said they would choose a regular public school for their child. Yet 91% of Kentucky's K-12 students attend regular public schools because other affordable options are absent.

Kentucky clearly lacks a sufficient choice of educational opportunities to match parents' schooling preferences.

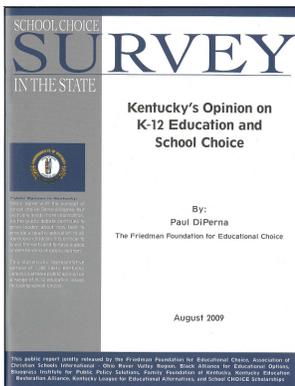
KLEA firmly believes that the time has come to provide all Kentucky parents with students in K-12 with additional, affordable choices for their children's education.

We are happy to help fund public education with our tax dollars so that the children attending these schools receive excellent educations.

But we also feel that the time has come to pass a corporate tax credit bill that will generate additional financial resources that will allow us to provide a superior education for both public and non-public students.

The Friedman survey tells us that Kentuckians are ready for a positive change.

I invite you to read the entire Kentucky survey on K-12 education at [www.friedmanfoundation.org](http://www.friedmanfoundation.org).



vides a statistically significant representative sampling for the population in the state.

A set of screening questions was used to determine past voting behavior and likely voting behavior in 2010. Respondents were asked if they voted in 2008 and planned to vote in the 2010 election. Respondents who satisfied both of these criteria were classified as "likely voters" and were included in the survey. The sample's statistical significance and probability are sufficient for assessment and decision-making purposes. The margin of sampling error is plus or minus three percentage points.

Key findings from the interviews include:

- Kentucky Democrats and Republicans find common ground on school choice.
- Less than one in four consider the public school system to be "good" or "excellent."
- Kentuckians are skeptical about new public school spending.
- An overwhelming majority of voters, 86%, would choose a private, charter or virtual school or home schooling.
- Kentuckians express a relatively high preference for private schools.

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# *Progressive Taxation Promotes the Common Good*

By William R. Jones

By any measure this has been a difficult year. The volatility of the economy and the reverberations of a rancorous political environment have elicited emotions ranging from uncertainty to downright panic. It has been a year in which even those who have been the very best stewards of God's gifts have wondered what their long term financial future will bring. With each paycheck comes a reminder, in the form of our withholdings, that all of us are in this together. And though we may wish our taxes did not take such a bite out of our earnings, we are grateful that these deductions afford us with a functioning national infrastructure and that such taxes, hopefully, contribute to the common good.



From the early days of the Republic to the present, taxation has been a subject of considerable national debate. In his farewell address to Congress in 1796, George Washington put the issue before the legislators of our heavily indebted new nation: *"It is essential [to bear in mind]...that toward the payment of debts there must be revenue; that to have revenue there must be taxes; that no taxes can be devised which are not more or less inconvenient and unpleasant."*

Though the "father of our country" spoke of taxes as the vehicle for the nation's debt relief, today we may suppose that he would necessarily speak of taxes as financing the multiple services which citizens expect from government at every level, services which they could not provide for themselves because they require excessive cost and complex structures.

For people of faith, the tax system must be evaluated not only according to our expectations of government's responsibilities, but also in light of social teachings based on Gospel values and in the context of complex and inter-related contemporary factors, some of which we have too few tools or too little time to digest. Today our local, state and federal governments struggle:

- to control the spiraling deficit;
- to address the aging of the population and the consequent rising costs of entitlement programs;
- to grasp the ramifications of the globalization of the economy; and,
- to confront the widening disparities between the rich and poor.

During the past several decades, the economic dispar-

ity between the poorest and the richest Americans has widened. This is partly the result of enormous increases in the salaries of many upper echelon executives and professionals, and the stagnation of wages and job losses among many working class employees. The growing "wealth gap" also is related to tax cuts, which have reduced the highest income tax bracket from 79% in 1981 to 35% today. These changes have also reduced inheritance taxes and levies on capital gains. This erosion of "progressivity" in tax rates and the rise in "regressive" taxes has left taxpayers with relatively modest incomes paying similar rates of taxes as persons with the nation's highest incomes.

Exactly what do we mean when we refer to a "progressivity" in taxes or a "regressive tax"? Our federal income tax is an example of "progressive taxation." A progressive tax increases in percentage as an individual's financial resources increase. The consequence is that those with greater financial means are taxed at a higher rate than are those who are less well-off. A "regressive" tax is one that takes a larger percentage of a lower income and a smaller percentage of a higher income. For example, taxes on basic necessities (which form a larger percentage of the expenditure of the lower income population) are regressive taxes. A "flat" tax (such as a sales tax) is an example of a regressive tax in that a lower income person pays a higher proportion of his or her income than a relatively wealthier person.

Catholic social teaching upholds the principle that a just tax system must be progressive in nature. In their 1986 Pastoral, "Economic Justice for All," the U.S. Bishops described progressivity as *"an important means of reducing the severe inequalities of income and wealth in the nation."* In addition the Bishops of Kentucky, in their 2004 pastoral letter, "Principles of Taxation, Allocation of Revenue, Contributing to the Common Good," stated unambiguously: *"Taxation in any form should be based on one's ability to pay. ... Catholic social teaching supports a more progressive form of taxation."* And we discover the bias of the Church for progressive taxation (even internally) when we review the Code of Canon Law *"...the diocesan bishop*

***"Taxation in any form should be based on one's ability to pay."***

*William R. (Bill) Jones is the Diocesan Director of Catholic Charities in the diocese of Covington. He holds a Masters degree in Social Work from the University of Kentucky and a Master of Divinity from Lexington Theological Seminary. He has worked at Catholic Charities in Covington since 1981.*

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... has the right to impose a moderate tax for the needs of the diocese ... this tax is to be proportionate to their income..." [Can. 1263]

The practice of imposing and paying taxes is a necessary condition of living in a democratic society. "Submission to authority and co-responsibility for the common good make it morally obligatory to pay taxes" [Catechism §2240] The U.S. tax system promotes the common good insofar as the revenue raised through taxation allows citizens to experience the democratic freedoms that we view as essential. However, two principles of Catholic social teaching apply specifically to taxation, namely the *common good* and the *preferential option for the poor*. A just and progressive tax system represents a practical application of the principle of promoting the "common good," defined

as "the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily" [Catechism of the Catholic Church §1906.]

Catholic social teaching, as expressed in contemporary papal encyclicals, is focused "especially on man as he is involved in a complex network of relationships within modern societies," not the least of which involves our complex economic relationships [Centesimus Annus, 1991, No. 54]. In considering the complexity of our national, state and local systems of taxation, of paramount concern is a focus upon the *person* of the taxpayer since "*individual men are necessarily the foundation, cause, and end of all social institutions.*" [Mater et Magistra, 1961, No. 219]. Within this context, two human needs affect and are affected by any tax system: the aspiration to *equality* and the aspiration to *participation*. "*The goods of this world are originally meant for all,*" explains *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (1987). All taxes, no matter their type, should facilitate equality and should also call forth participation of all citi-

## Kentucky Tax Facts

- Kentucky's state/local tax burden is below average: Kentucky's state/local tax burden of 9.4% is below the national average of 9.7%.
- Kentucky taxpayers pay \$3,243 per capita in state and local taxes.
- Kentucky levies a 6% general sales or use tax on consumers, the national median. Sales tax collections per capita ranked 40th nationally.
- Kentucky cigarette taxes are among the lowest nationally.
- At the start of 2009, Kentucky's gasoline tax ranked 30th nationally.
- Kentucky's top corporate tax rate is ranks 36th among states levying a corporate tax.
- Kentucky is a federal income tax beneficiary state receiving back \$1.51 in tax purchased goods and services for every federal tax dollar paid.
- Because of the predominance of regressive sales and use taxes in Kentucky, the top 20% of taxpayers pay a lower percentage of income in taxes than the bottom 80% of taxpayers.
- The wealthiest 1% of Kentuckians pays the least percentage of their income in taxes.
- Since 1995, six different state tax cuts have cumulatively cost Kentucky \$2.24 billion.

Source: Tax Foundation, 529 14th Street, NW, Suite 420, Washington, DC 20045-100

zens, relative to their ability to pay, in supporting the common good of society.

In John Paul II's 1987 encyclical, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, § 42 we find a stirring message defining "the option the poor." "*This is an option, or a special form of primacy in the exercise of Christian charity, to which the whole tradition of the Church bears witness. It affects the life of each Christian inasmuch as he or she seeks to imitate the life of Christ, but it applies equally to our social responsibilities and hence to our manner of living. ... Our decisions in the political and economic fields must be marked by these realities.*" From this we deduce that any tax that places an excessive burden on the poor must be suspect, at least initially. Such a tax is contrary to the interests of the poor and vulnerable. In judging the morality of any system of taxation, Catholics and all people of good will need to ask themselves whether a the tax promotes the common good and protects the interests of the poor, or on the contrary,

whether it shows preference for those who are most well-off.

Certain improvements in the current systems of taxation could bring them more into line with the principles of the *common good* and the *preferential option for the poor*. Tax policy can protect the poor by including exemptions to ensure that the incidence of taxation does not fall inequitably upon them, thus protecting them from additional financial burdens. In addition, just tax policies generate the revenues necessary to provide for the poor the necessities of life, including education and health care. Any tax policy that erodes the "progressiveness" of the personal federal income tax, and increases sales and use taxes moves is a policy opposite to that suggested by Catholic social teaching.

What specific steps in reforming tax policy might be consistent with Catholic social teaching?

First, both the state and federal personal income tax systems should be reformed into simple systems in which

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## Progressive Taxation Promotes the Common Good

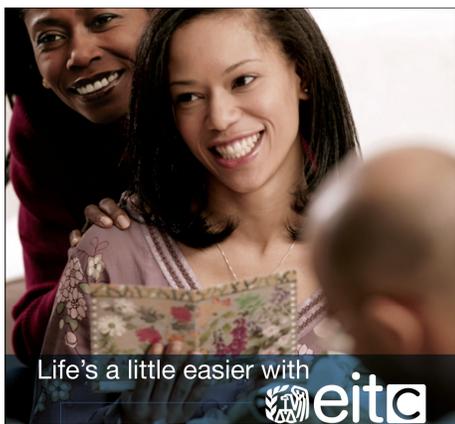
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all forms of income are included in the tax base, with very few exceptions. This would mean that all income from wages, interest, dividends and capital gains should be treated equally and taxed at each taxpayer's given rate.

Secondly, in order to close loopholes that benefit the more affluent, deductions should be limited to a single large standard deduction. Taxes on the first \$20,000 of income would be assessed only at a token rate, so as to allow all citizens to participate in the common good, without imposing a burdensome strain on limited income.

Finally, in the area of deductions, the distinction in standard deductions for taxpayers who are single, married or heads of households should be kept. The only credits should be a per-child credit, an Earned Income Credit or credits for other socially beneficial expenditures, such as the adoption tax credit.

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***"Submission to authority and co-responsibility for the common good make it morally obligatory to pay taxes"***

**[Catechism of the Catholic Church §2240]**

ages more people to file carefully prepared income taxes; tax filers would spend their refunds in local communities to meet all levels of need and reduce their dependence on taxpayer-funded government services; state spending on entitlements is thus reduced; and, the spending creates a multiplier effect with money put back into the local area, benefiting the community and reducing the net cost to the state. These tax credits could be used to pay off debt, buy transportation to work, invest in education, purchase local products, pay for health care and save to build assets, expenditures

which return tax revenue, largely in the form of sales taxes, at a rate which exceeds the amounts credited.

Catholic social teaching promotes the common good and protects the poor when it is used as the basis for insuring that the foundation that all taxes are both horizontally and vertically equitable. Horizontal equity means that the tax liability should be the same for two families with the same income level. Vertical equity means that the burden placed upon taxpayers at different income levels should be different, because as income levels rise, the ability to pay taxes rises.

These changes suggested here, based on the notion of increased progressivity, (as well as others that time and space do not permit) would create a tax system that is more consistent with the principles of the *common good* and the *preferential option for the poor*. They would meet the criteria set out by the Magisterium and would be consistent with the philosophy of progressivity prescribed in Canon Law and would be consistent with the responsibilities described in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Further such proposals are horizontally fair, since all taxpayers with similar family situations would pay the same amount of taxes. Vertical equity would be accomplished, because as income rises, so would the tax burden. Put simply, the more one makes, the more one pays. The poor would be protected, because low-income taxpayers, through the creation of a much larger standard deduction and a Kentucky Earned Income Credit, would no longer be subject to the federal income tax.

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## “We Cannot Remain Passive Bystanders”

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sus the right of the woman over her own body and wellbeing; the right of the patient to the full spectrum of medical procedures versus the right of the provider to follow principles of conscience. But any discussion of rights cannot be effective apart from a clear understanding and articulation of the duties that correspond to those rights. This is a point well formulated by Pope Benedict XVI in his third encyclical entitled, *Caritas in Veritate - Love in Truth*, which was promulgated this past June. The Holy Father teaches:

... it is important to call for a renewed reflection on how *rights presuppose duties, if they are not to become mere license*. Nowadays we are witnessing a grave inconsistency. On the one hand, appeals are made to alleged rights, arbitrary and non-essential in nature, accompanied by the demand that they be recognized and promoted by public structures, while, on the other hand, elementary and basic rights remain unacknowledged and are violated in much of the world [107]. A link has often been noted between claims to a “right to excess”, and even to transgression and vice, within affluent societies, and the lack of food, drinkable water, basic instruction and elementary health care in areas of the underdeveloped world and on the outskirts of large metropolitan centers. The link consists in this: individual rights, when detached from a framework of duties which grants them their full meaning, can run wild, leading to an escalation of demands which is effectively unlimited and indiscriminate. An overemphasis on rights leads to a disregard for duties. Duties set a limit on rights because they point to the anthropological and ethical framework of which rights are a part, in this way ensuring that they do not become license. Duties thereby reinforce rights and call for their defense and promotion as a task to be undertaken in the service of the common good (n. 43).

Last week, exercising our duty as moral teachers, my brother Bishops and I sent a letter through the Catholic Conference of Kentucky to all our parishes calling them to action at this critical moment in the national health care debate. In union with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, we asked these pastoral leaders to mobilize parishioners to fervent prayer and to action as faithful citizens.

The message was succinct: contact your Senators and Representatives. Tell them that current legislative proposals do not meet the fundamental moral tests that protect life, do not safeguard the consciences of health care providers, do not assure the prohibitions against expanding abortion with public funding or insurance mandates, and do not provide access for all with a special concern for the poor and immigrants.

In the current public debate, we have already witnessed intense acrimony, contradictory assertions of facts, and posturing shifts based not on principles, but on political advantage. These unfortunate characteristics only serve to under-



Catholic health care providers gathered at the Catholic Center in Lexington on Nov. 4, 2009. At the beginning of the day participants introduced themselves and briefly stated what they hoped to learn from being there.

score the serious duties that we, as faithful citizens, have at this particular time in our nation’s political process. The founders of Catholic health care institutions, mostly women religious, had a definite understanding of their duties for the health of society and met that responsibility with well formed consciences. It is incumbent on us, the benefactors of their vision and mission to do no less than they did — to be the advocates, the proponents, and the visible presence of the moral pathway for health care reform.

The Catholic faithful and Catholic health professionals must join with the bishops in a unified stance regarding this current legislative effort at health care reform. Catholic health care institutions have a unique role and opportunity to leverage their influence for a proper and moral outcome. We must be unified in acknowledging that health care reform is badly needed. But badly configured and immoral health care is not and cannot be mistaken for genuine health care reform.

The founders of Catholic health care deserve our unity of purpose, our fidelity to their mission, vision and Catholic values. In our unified stance on the moral principles of life, conscience, and justice, we honor the work of our heroic predecessors and we continue their rich legacy for the future. As both Mike Rodgers and John Carr told us, the President has committed to health care reform that will contain no federal funding for abortion and will include the necessary conscience protections. We have the opportunity and the obligation to assure that the final legislation is true to President Obama’s public commitment.

Since our nation’s earliest years, the Catholic Church has worked with American civil authorities in many mutually supportive ways to advance what Thomas Jefferson called “the wholesome purposes of society” (C. Chaput, “Catholic Charities Adrift”, *First Things*: November 2009, p. 25).

We, the Bishops, and you, the Catholic health professionals of Kentucky, and your colleagues across the country hold privileged places in society; we cannot remain passive bystanders at this decisive moment in our history. Responding to the call of the Gospel includes our faithful action. Today we have received reliable information, additional resources and suggested strategies for action. Pray fervently, make your voices heard, mobilize your organizations, and redouble your efforts so that Congress will act to ensure that needed health care reform will prevail through their debate and legislative votes. Authentic reform and that reform alone will truly protect the life, dignity and health care of all persons in our nation.



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***In-Person Informed Consent for Women Considering Abortion, Poor Persons and the Budget, Severely Mentally Ill and the Death Penalty Are Concerns Facing the General Assembly***

The first week of January brings legislators back to town to confront the many problems facing Kentucky.

The recent federal debate on health care demonstrated so clearly how important it is to have the voices of Faithful Citizens speaking to their elected representatives. Over a week-long period, Catholics concerned about human life sent more than 200,000 emails to their representatives and urged them to reject any legislation that would require them to be participants in paying for the abortion of another woman’s child. The House listened and overwhelmingly voted to keep the current prohibitions in place.

From January until April, the Catholic Conference will be inviting your participation on issues related to human life and dignity: concern for the unborn, for persons needing health care, for children and their quality education, for those facing death at the hands of the state, and others.

If you are not already on our Faithful Citizen list, please sign up. If you are a member, please invite three others you know to join you. Also, join us in Frankfort in February for the annual Catholics @ the Capitol event. Details will be found at [www.ccky.org](http://www.ccky.org) and in your mailbox.



Bill Pelke, co-founder of Journey of Hope, lost his grandmother to murder, but forgave her killer. Speaking at Bellarmine University in November, he urged listeners to oppose the death penalty. Bill returns to Louisville January 14—17 for the annual meeting of the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty at the Seelbach Hotel. Details found at [www.ncadp.org](http://www.ncadp.org).

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