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## CALIFORNIA CATHOLIC BISHOPS SUPPORT PROPOSITION 85

August 18, 2006

The California Catholic Conference of Bishops support Proposition 85, the constitutional amendment initiative entitled, *Waiting Period and Parental Notification Before Termination of Minor's Pregnancy*, which will appear on the November 2006 ballot. The proposition, which has been called the *Parents Right to Know and Child Protection Act* by its sponsors, would require notification of the parents or guardians of a minor 48 hours before she obtains an abortion, unless a judge determines that such notification places the minor in danger.

As bishops we agree with the declaration in the initiative, that "The People of California have a special and compelling interest in and responsibility for protecting the health and well-being of children, and promoting parent-child communication and parental responsibility."

We also agree Proposition 85 contains public policy that is both sensible and realistic which will benefit not only our families but our society as a whole. It is a sensible policy to encourage a minor girl faced with a serious decision like an unexpected pregnancy to go to her parents for their love, their wisdom, and their counsel. It is a realistic policy that a minor girl's parents be notified of her request for an abortion whether or not she chooses to consult them. Society will benefit because parental involvement laws have the effect of discouraging teenage pregnancies—as documented in a recent study.<sup>1</sup> And individual rights and unborn babies will be protected because a minor girl will be afforded protection in the unfortunate circumstance in which she is being coerced to have an abortion.

Our *Catechism* teaches that the family is the "privileged community" wherein children are meant to grow in wisdom, stature and grace. It also counsels us that public authorities should not usurp the family's prerogatives or interfere in its life.<sup>2</sup> We are convinced that "the Church must be committed to the task of educating and supporting...people involved in law-making, government and the administration of justice, so that legislation will always reflect those principles and moral values which...advance the common good."<sup>3</sup>

We believe that society's common good is enhanced when family integrity is honored, parental responsibility is respected, and nascent human life is preserved.

We strongly encourage Catholics in our state to share their time and treasure in promoting Proposition 85 as good public policy, and in exercising their citizenship in voting for it in November.

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<sup>1</sup> [Analyzing the Effect of Pro-Life Legislation on the Incidence of Abortion Among Minors](#), Michael J. New, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, University of Alabama, presented to the Association for Interdisciplinary Research in Values and Social Change, June 15, 2005.

<sup>2</sup> [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#), nos. 2206-2209.

<sup>3</sup> "The Church in America," No. 19, quoting Synod for America, proposition 72, included in the Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities, 2001