

## **Knoxville DCCW Legislative Commission Report**

Board Meeting, September 29,2018

### **How can you support the work of the Legislative Commission in your Deanery and Parish?**

1. Inform yourself. Look for information on National Issues on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops web site ([www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org))
2. Know your Tennessee Legislators and Congressman and be alert to issues on state and local levels. November 6<sup>th</sup> is election day. There will be changes.
3. Ask your members and congregations to email, write, phone and visit your Senators and Congressman. Email has proven very effective.
4. Be aware of Catholic social justice principles that are the basis for legislative advocacy and which reinforce our faith and assist in dialogue.

### **What is Happening Now?**

Congress will be in session until September 30<sup>th</sup> and it is hoped that an up to date report can be given at the Board meeting.

Information received from the USCCB “The Catholic LOOP” newsletter states that the focus for FY 2019 is:

**Spending Bills:** The Senate has until September 30<sup>th</sup> to pass spending bills to keep the government open. The hope is to pass 3 compromise bills that fund a large portion of the government before the new budget year, October 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Filling the Supreme Court Vacancy:** Brett Kavanaugh has a long record of public service in Federal government and a strong commitment to interpreting the constitution fairly. He has been strongly supported by Catholic groups.

**Passing a Farm Bill Reauthorization:** This bill provides payments to farmers when prices for major crops decline and it extends food aid for low income Americans. The SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) is also considered in this bill with the hope of increasing food stamp coverage. The USCCB has sent a letter asking for additional funding for SNAP stating that food is a basic need. The current Farm Bill expires on September 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Immigration:** United States will limit the number of refugees that can resettle in the country to 30,000 in 2019. This is the lowest number in history. It has been said that this cap should not be the “sole barometer” for the United States’ humanitarian efforts and “must be considered in the context of many other forms of protection and assistance offered.”

**Federal Aviation Administration:** Congress has until September 30<sup>th</sup> to extend FAA budget that funds air traffic and air system improvements. This Senate Bill will also include consumer protection and development of new Drone policies.

**Muslim Ban:** Through the Franciscan Action Network, we have been asked to call upon Congress to act and support HR4271 and S1979 bills that would declare the ban on Muslim’s illegal and unconstitutional. This current law harms, dehumanizes and excludes people of color. It separates families and denies educational opportunities.

### **What Can We Do?**

**Pray:** It is important to pray for our Legislators at every Mass and in all of your daily prayers that they will always act for the Common Good and especially for the poor and vulnerable. Pray for our Bishops especially as all United States Bishops gather in November for their annual Fall meeting.

**Know who your local Legislators:** With elections coming up November 6<sup>th</sup> many of our elected officials will change. Voting is one of our most important responsibilities as citizens. You are called upon to apply the teachings and core values of our faith in the choices you make in the voting booth.

**Request and Use Catholic Literature in your parishes:** Brochures on “Religious Liberty and Catholics”, A Catholic guide, “In the Voting Booth” and “Immigration” can be ordered from Our Sunday Visitor ([www.osv.com](http://www.osv.com)). Use the United States Conference of Bishops web site ([www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org)) for Catholic policy.

**Study:** The Principles of Catholic Social Teaching

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