

## **Knoxville DCCW Legislative Commission Annual Report**

**Convention, April 2019    Patty Johnson, Chair**

**“Among our tasks as witnesses to the love of Christ is that of giving a voice to the cry of the poor.” Pope Francis**

You have spoken out in the past year and there is good news of approved legislation in Congress.

The **First Step Act** which is geared toward helping to integrate prisoners into society after they serve their prison sentence was signed into law.

A truly monumental milestone in the life of the **Catholic Mobilizing Network** to end capital punishment was brought about when Pope Francis made a historic revision to the Catholic Catechism which declared the death penalty “inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the human person.

U S Congress overwhelmingly approved a 5-year **Farm Bill** that will protect the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

Brett Kavanaugh was appointed to the **Supreme Court**. He has a strong commitment to interpreting the constitution fairly and was strongly supported by Catholic groups.

The rejuvenated **Catholic Public Policy Commission** for the Diocese of Knoxville had its first skype meeting with representatives from the Dioceses of Knoxville, Nashville and Memphis in February. Many of the Bills pending in Tennessee Legislation were discussed. Health, Education, Human Services, Legal, and Social Justice Committee Bills will continue to be watched. The Bishops of Tennessee issued a joint statement on Tennessee Heartbeat Bill which will appear in Catholic publications. In this statement they stated that they believed in the sanctity of human life and that it must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception to natural death. They wrote of the history of such a bill in other states and stated that given the field of legal realities, they believe it would not be prudent to support the “Heartbeat Bill” and that it would be best to support other pro-life pieces of legislation that stand a better chance of being upheld in the courts.

**What can you do in your Deanery and Parish affiliates to participate in the Political process?**

**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 especially the poor and vulnerable. Join with the United States Catholic Bishops every Friday to pray and fast for a renewal of a culture of life

and marriage and for the protection of Religious liberty in our country. Plan to participate in the National Day of Prayer on Thursday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Know your Legislators:** Respond to your legislators when receiving “Call to Action” on pending legislation. Apply Social Justice teaching and core values of our faith in your responses.

**Request and Use Catholic Literature in your parishes:** Brochures on “Religious Liberty and Catholics”, and on “Immigration” can be ordered from Our Sunday Visitor ([www.osv.com](http://www.osv.com))

Use the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops web site ([www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org)) for Catholic Policy.

**Study:** The Principles of Catholic Social Teaching. Subscribe to “The Loop” from Catholic Vote. ([theloop@catholicvote.org](mailto:theloop@catholicvote.org)) for the latest News, Updates and Happenings on a National Level.

Visit the web site of the Tennessee Catholic Public Policy Commission ([www.tncppc.org](http://www.tncppc.org)) for up to date Legislative information in Tennessee.

Help accelerate progress on Global Nutrition by contacting your Senators and Representatives and urge them to pass legislation on Global Nutrition. Participate in Bread for World’s 2019 Offering of Letters for Better Nutrition, Better Tomorrow. Resources can be obtained from [www.bread.org/ol](http://www.bread.org/ol)

In your Affiliates publicize and act of the K-DCCW 2019 Convention Resolution, “Catholics in the Public Square”.

**Pope Francis** has reminded us that those in political office must use their office in service to others by basing their work on the foundation of charity and human virtues. He has shared with us Cardinal Van Thuan’s eight beatitudes for politicians to ponder and practice:

- Blessed be the politician with a lofty sense and deep understanding of his role.
- Blessed by the politician who personally exemplifies credibility.
- Blessed by the politician who works for the common good and not his own interests.
- Blessed be the politician who remains consistent.
- Blessed the politician who works for unity.
- Blessed by the politician who works to accomplish radical change.
- Blessed by the politician who is capable of listening.
- Blessed be the politician who is without fear.