

## **Statement of the Catholic Bishops of New Jersey on the Reproductive Freedom Act**

The Catholic Church believes and teaches that all human life is sacred from conception to natural death. For that reason, we, the Bishops of each of the dioceses in New Jersey, join in voicing the strongest possible opposition to the “Reproductive Freedom Act.”

Without minimizing other serious threats to human life and dignity evident in contemporary American society, the Catholic Church consistently maintains that “the threat of abortion remains our preeminent priority because it directly attacks life itself, because it takes place within the sanctuary of the family, and because of the number of lives destroyed” (USCCB, Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, “Introductory Letter,” 2020).

When informed of the text of the USCCB document early in 2020, Pope Francis observed that the right to life of the unborn “is the most fundamental right. This is not first a religious issue; it is a human rights issue. (Pope Francis to American Catholic Bishops, USCCB Region IX, January 16, 2020).”

As the Catholic Bishops of New Jersey, we urge all Catholics and people of good will to reject this proposed legislative initiative in our state and to contact your State legislators to vigorously express opposition to its passage.

Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.  
Archbishop, Archdiocese of Newark

Most Reverend Kevin J. Sweeney  
Bishop, Diocese of Paterson

Most Reverend David M. O’Connell, C.M.  
Bishop, Diocese of Trenton

Most Reverend James F. Checchio  
Bishop, Diocese of Metuchen

Most Reverend Dennis J. Sullivan  
Bishop, Diocese of Camden

Most Reverend Kurt Burnette  
Bishop, Eparchy of Passaic

Most Reverend Yousif Habash  
Bishop of Our Lady of Deliverance of Syriac Catholic Diocese

October 5, 2020