

# Legislation requires due diligence

The Aug. 20 issue contains two items that are strongly connected. Columnist Russell Shaw draws attention to the error of religious groups taking position on matters they don't know enough about. Environmental activists have frequently been successful in getting church leaders to sign on publicly to the positions for which they are lobbying. By adhering to the specific agenda of such an advocacy group, Shaw points out that the religious leaders are exceeding their domain of competence, which will eventually lead to loss of credibility. Re a pair of stories headed "Leaders scrutinize health care reform," careful diligence by the USCCB revealed that the "Pregnant Women Support Act" is a genuinely pro-life bill. However, the bill entitled "Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act" contains several pro-abortion features. Unfortunately, that deficiency escaped the attention of two Catholic groups, the National Coalition of American Nuns and Network, a Catholic social-justice lobbying group.

We have in the Catholic community organizations that are competent to evaluate intricate legislative packages. When another group with Catholic affiliation takes it upon themselves to weigh in on societal issues without first becoming fully informed, the outcome can most charitably be termed "error."

The USCCB will be well served if its subcommittees perform due diligence and avoid being swept up by something that sounds good on the surface.