

# MCC explains where the church stands on life issues

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The general election isn't until November, but the primary election is June 24, with early voting June 12-19. With every seat in the Legislature up for election and one-third without an incumbent in the race, the primary election's results will significantly shape the direction of Maryland's lawmaking for years to come, said Mary Ellen Russell, Maryland Catholic Conference's executive director.

The Maryland Catholic Conference, which advocates for public policy on behalf of the state's bishops, urges Catholics not only to vote, but also to educate candidates about issues important to the local church.

In this article, the Catholic Review highlights the MCC focus of life issues.

## **Life issues**

This spring, the MCC celebrated the passage of a law requiring the Maryland Department of Health to provide accurate information about Down syndrome as a resource for health care professionals and parents whose children are diagnosed with the condition. The MCC's backing of the bill was motivated by the church's respect for life from conception to natural death.

In a Legislature where most anti-abortion bills are quick to die, the MCC is working to find common pro-life ground. That has involved efforts to protect human trafficking victims, enact surrogacy regulations to end Maryland's "Wild West" approach to the practice, and expand programs available to homicide victims' families.

According to a 2013 survey from pollster Gallup, most Americans oppose late-term abortions. The MCC supports prohibiting abortion after the fetus can feel pain (around 20 weeks), as several other states have recently done.

Andrea Garvey, MCC associate director for respect life, testified that she noted among medical professionals a distinct concern for her unborn child as a separate patient after 20 weeks, and that *Roe v. Wade*, the 1973 Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion, acknowledged that the state had a compelling interest to protect the unborn child in the latter part of pregnancy.

Fighting physician-assisted suicide may also be on the horizon.

Where do candidates stand? Check out the MCC survey

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