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## **Statement of the Catholic Bishops of New Jersey on the Passage of the Freedom of Reproductive Choice Act into Law**

The Catholic Bishops of New Jersey join to express our profound disappointment and deep concern about the passage of S49/A6260 -- the Freedom of Reproductive Choice Act, which codifies into state law an individual's right to an abortion, including late-term abortions. This law departs from the fundamental Catholic teaching that all life is sacred from conception to natural death. Even more distressing is that the legal and ethical calculus that underlies this new legislation absolutely and forthrightly extinguishes the human and moral identity of the unborn child. Perhaps the legislators who rushed through this Act in the waning moments of their terms did not want citizens to understand fully its inhuman and lethal consequences.

We have failed as a society when a response to any pregnancy is fear rather than joy. Sadly, too often this fear is born out of the mother's uncertainty she will not be able to provide for herself and her child the resources necessary to live a flourishing life. We must do better. Therefore, we urge all Catholics and people of good will to actively participate in breaking down the economic, employment, social, racial, and emotional barriers that lead mothers into thinking that abortion is a better option than life.

For our part, the Catholic Church is committed to broadening and increasing awareness about the abundant resources and programs we offer that include life-affirming health and prenatal care, emotional support, assistance in bearing and raising her child, and basic needs such as housing, food, and clothing to pregnant mothers seeking or considering alternatives to abortion.

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

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