



The Catholic Diocese of Biloxi

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•
Most Reverend Louis F. Kihneman, III
Bishop of Biloxi



The Catholic Diocese of Jackson

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•
Most Reverend Joseph R. Kopacz, D.D.
Bishop of Jackson

May 1, 2020

We, the undersigned, Most Reverend Joseph R. Kopacz, Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Jackson, and Most Reverend Louis F. Kihneman III, Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Biloxi, are writing on behalf of the Catholic Church throughout Mississippi with regard to HB 1295, The Life Equality Act. This bill seeks to protect unborn lives from discrimination in the womb on the basis of race, sex, and disability. We believe in the legal protection of these classes as they are equal in the eyes of our Creator. We seek to live out the Gospel of Jesus Christ by caring for the most vulnerable among us.

Our Catholic Charities are very active in supporting pregnancy resource centers, adoption, racial reconciliation, disability rights, and family assistance needs in Mississippi. We will continue to serve those in need while advocating for the preservation of life at all stages. It would be detrimental to our Church's mission, as well as to the common good of our State, to be silent on matters of human life and discrimination.

The Church's steadfast stance on the protection of preborn human lives has biblical support, e.g., the words of Psalm 139, declaring that each of us is fearfully and wonderfully made, knit in our mothers' wombs. But even if one does not acknowledge the Bible, the truth that the womb of a pregnant woman contains a unique human life cannot be denied. This truth ought to be reflected by our Mississippi legal system without prejudice.

We thank you for your attention to this critical bill that is before you. As we celebrate the 25th Anniversary of John Paul II's Evangelium Vitae, Gospel of Life, The Church reflects deeply on our duty to protect the "least of these" in our society. May the Holy Spirit enlighten your deliberations and decisions to choose wisely on behalf of all people of Mississippi.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Louis Kihneman".

Louis F. Kihneman, III
Bishop of Biloxi

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph R. Kopacz".

Joseph R. Kopacz
Bishop of Jackson