



Welcome Packet for the 86th Legislative Session Beginning January 8, 2019

Prepared by the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops



Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops

THE PUBLIC POLICY VOICE OF THE CHURCH

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Jennifer Allmon
TCCB EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

January 8, 2019

To Catholics working in and around the Capitol,

The Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops (TCCB) would like to welcome you to the 86th Legislative Session! We commend you for your commitment to serve the people of our state. We are sending this welcome packet to introduce you to the TCCB's legislative agenda as well as the Catholic community in downtown Austin.

The TCCB represents the 16 bishops of Texas as the public policy voice of the Catholic Church. Our agenda, included on the next page, is broad because it is informed by moral and social teaching as well as our institutional perspective. As we faithfully uphold the direction of the Bishops, we seek open communication with all those who work on the same topics.

The last page of this packet provides information about several events which will occur this spring, including a weekly rosary at the Capitol, the Ash Wednesday service, Mass celebrating St. Patrick's Feast Day, and Advocacy Day. Every week, there are almost 50 Masses celebrated within 1 mile of the Capitol, and Confession is heard a dozen times. We hope that these readily-available Sacraments will help you as you work for the common good of all Texans.

Over 8 million Texans are Catholic and they support and volunteer in a wide range of ministries. The TCCB is committed to helping Catholic Texans communicate with their lawmakers so that we can all actively protect the most vulnerable persons among us by improving the laws of our state.

May God bless your good work and bring it to fruition,

Jennifer Allmon
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2019 Legislative Agenda: 86th Session



Life and Family Life: Human life is intrinsically valuable and should be protected by law from fertilization to natural death.

Moreover, the family is the sanctuary of life in which parents teach children how they ought to live. Therefore, the TCCB opposes direct threats to innocent human life, from fertilization to natural death, and seeks to promote strong, stable, and healthy families. Specifically, the TCCB:

- opposes abortion and euthanasia;
- supports the elimination of all funding for abortion providers;
- supports increased funding to abortion alternatives for expectant mothers;
- supports the elimination of wrongful birth lawsuits;
- supports proposals that recognize the sacredness, fidelity, and permanency of marriage;
- supports an improved foster care system which respects subsidiarity through a community-based model; and
- supports increased recruitment, formation, and support of foster, adoptive, and biological parents.



Immigration: Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness in America are preserved by a government that is of, by, and for the people.

This is the exceptional American heritage, and it has been charitably offered to the world's oppressed and persecuted for over two centuries. The TCCB encourages its continuation, welcomes migrants embracing the American dream, and respects the enforcement of laws which preserve the common good. Specifically, the TCCB:

- opposes efforts to reduce access by immigrants to IDs, birth certificates, drivers' licenses, education, and healthcare;
- supports care for unaccompanied minors and alternatives to family detention;
- supports enforcement measures which are targeted, proportional, and humane; and
- supports the reunification of immigrant families.



Restorative Justice: In response to crime, the state has primary responsibility to uphold justice, with the goals of achieving restitution, protecting the common good, deterring offenses, and rehabilitating offenders. However, our state struggles with overincarceration and overcriminalization, which have arisen from the hardness that so often accompanies all earthly justice. Therefore, the TCCB seeks mercy in order to help the state achieve the goals listed above. Specifically, the TCCB:

- opposes the imposition and use of the death penalty;
- supports bail reforms which depend upon the accused's danger, not their wealth;
- supports the rehabilitation of offenders who commit non-violent state jail felonies;
- supports raising the age of criminal responsibility for 17-year-olds;
- supports parole board review of lengthy sentences given to juveniles; and
- supports efforts to recategorize rent-to-own defaults as a civil offense.



Education: The family is the sanctuary of life, in which parents teach children how they ought to live. Thus, the education of children is a primary right and serious duty of parents, and the state participates in education with the parents' consent. Moreover, the central focus of public financing for education should always be the good of children. Therefore, the TCCB supports expanded educational opportunities for Texas parents and students. Specifically, the TCCB:

- supports parental choice in education, including tax credit scholarships;
- supports measures ensuring all children have the benefit of a safe school environment, whether public or private;
- supports creating a do-not-hire registry of persons barred from school employment due to misconduct with students or minors;
- supports student-based education finance that is responsive to student demographics;

- supports the autonomy of private institutions;
- supports increased funding for tuition equalization grants; and
- supports access to Pre-Kindergarten, and before- or after-school child care.



Healthcare: While modern science has given rise to nearly miraculous cures for human illnesses, it may also be used to destroy life.

Thus, modern medicine should continually orient its work toward the dignity and transcendence of every human. To foster this, the TCCB promotes health and healthcare access in accord with the principles of bioethics. Specifically, the TCCB:

- supports healthcare which respects patient dignity and physician conscience;
- supports access to palliative care and monitors changes to the advance directive act;
- supports increased access to health insurance and healthcare, such as through Medicaid and CHIP;
- supports studies of maternal mortality and morbidity, and efforts to improve the health of Texas mothers;
- supports preventative care and education to help patients play a greater role in their health; and
- supports increased access to treatment for addiction.



Social Concerns: Texans have inherited remarkable economic opportunity, and employment arising from such opportunity

has a special dignity. We are grateful for these gifts. However, shrewdness in acquiring wealth can be so highly praised that we forget the poor and vulnerable, who are our neighbors, and cannot be neglected in the work for the common good. Therefore, the TCCB seeks to assist those who are in the greatest need. Specifically, the TCCB:

- supports initiatives that reduce marriage penalties in public assistance programs;
- opposes usurious loans, especially payday and auto-title lending;
- supports anti-poverty public assistance which incentivizes self-sufficiency;
- supports efforts to alleviate food insecurity and hunger, including through summer nutrition programs, school meals, and nutritional education;
- supports efforts to assist in the care and support of persons with disabilities; and

- supports efforts to combat human trafficking, care for victims, and reunify families.



Religious Liberty: The Church feeds the hungry; accompanies the lonely; comforts the sick, dying, and grieving; helps the addicted; gives aid to widows and orphans; shelters refugees; strengthens the fellowship between neighbors, citizens, and spouses; softens earthly justice with divine mercy; and inculcates the morality that a free nation needs to function. Yet today, religious liberty is under attack by the state. Such liberty is not only about our ability to worship by going to Mass on Sunday or praying the Rosary at home. Rather, it is about whether Christians can make our contribution to the common good of all Americans. Therefore, the TCCB seeks to maintain and protect religious liberty. Specifically, the TCCB:

- supports efforts to protect religious liberty, especially as it pertains to human life, marriage, and the family;
- supports conscience protection for individuals and organizations contracting with governments, especially healthcare providers, educators, and those who serve the poor and vulnerable; and
- supports incentives for charitable giving by taxpayers to programs maintained by faith-based nonprofit entities.



Creation: We should see nature with awe and wonder, but too often we tend to merely view ourselves as nature's masters, who rightly employ it to satisfy our ever-multiplying desires. We thereby forget, or never learn, how to live wisely, think deeply, or love generously, and these are the requisite virtues to ensuring that the earth remains fruitful for our posterity. Therefore, the TCCB hopes to foster the prudent stewardship of creation. Specifically, the TCCB:

- supports an increased understanding of Texas' water availability;
- supports efficiency and conservation in water use to maintain availability for irrigation and drinking;
- supports efficiency and conservation in energy use and efforts to mitigate pollution; and
- supports efficiency in disaster recovery coordination among non-profits.

The TCCB is a federation of all Roman Catholic dioceses and ordinariates in Texas. There are 8 million Catholics living in our state. To contact us, call our office at 512-339-9882, email jennifer@txcatholic.org, or find TXCatholic on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).



Events and Sacraments: Spring 2019

All are welcome to attend these events. Please contact us for more information or with questions.

Weekly Rosary: each Wednesday

On Wednesdays at 8:00 a.m., Sen. Lucio will host a rosary in the Civil Rights Room (3E.4).

Ash Wednesday Service: March 6th

The TCCB will host an Ash Wednesday service in the Capitol Auditorium beginning at 2:30 p.m.

Feast Day of St. Patrick: March 17th

Rep. Jim Murphy will host Mass at the Capitol to celebrate St. Patrick's feast day. Room and time TBD.

Advocacy Day: March 25th - 26th

The TCCB will host its annual Advocacy Day beginning with Mass at St. Mary Cathedral on Monday, March 25th at 6:30 p.m., and continuing with a day at the Capitol on Tuesday, March 26th.

St. Mary's Cathedral (203 E. 10th St.)

Mass

Sunday	8 am, 9:30 am, 12 pm, 1:45 pm (Spanish), 3:30 pm (Latin), 5:30 pm
Mon. - Fri.	6:30 am, 12:05 pm
Saturday	12:05 pm, 5:30 pm (Vigil)

Confession

Mon. - Fri.	11 am - 12 pm
Saturday	11 am - 12 pm, 4:30 pm - 5:30 pm

UT Catholic Center (2010 University Ave.)

Mass

Sunday	9 am, 11:30 am, 5:00 pm, 8:00 pm, and 2 pm (Polish) on 2 nd and 4 th Sundays
M/W/F	12:05 pm
T/Th	12:30 pm

Confession

Monday	12:30 pm - 1 pm
Tuesday	1 pm - 1:30 pm

St. Austin's Parish (2026 Guadalupe St.)

Mass

Sunday	7:30 am, 8:45 am, 11:30 am, 5:30 pm
Mon. - Fri.	8 am
Saturday	5 pm (Vigil)

Confession

Saturday	3:30 pm - 4:30 pm
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Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish (1206 E. 9th St.)

Mass

Sunday	7:45 am (Spanish), 9:45 am, 11:30 am, 6 pm (Spanish)
M/T/Th	5:30 pm
W/F	12:00 pm
Saturday	6 pm

Confession

Saturday	5:30 pm
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The Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops is a federation of all Roman Catholic dioceses located in the State of Texas. The TCCB fosters cooperation among the dioceses and the ministries of the Church in Texas and serves as the public policy arm of the Bishops of Texas before the state legislature, state agencies, and the Texas delegation in Congress. The political issues addressed by the Conference include institutional concerns of the Catholic Church as well as issues related to Catholic moral and social teaching.

There are more than 8 million Catholics living in Texas.

