

**A STATEMENT IN RESPONSE  
TO PASSAGE OF FEDERAL  
HEALTH CARE REFORM LEGISLATION**

**March 23, 2010**

**T**he Louisiana Conference of Catholic Bishops expresses its disappointment in the passage of health care reform as approved jointly by Congress and signed into law by President Obama. Our hope was that Congress would redesign the bill, ensuring that federal funding for abortion was eliminated, while strengthening the conscience clause so that medical care provided in Catholic hospitals would not be affected. This did not occur. We are also saddened that some members within our Catholic family, including the Catholic Health Association, took a position that, in our judgment, will neither promote the good of society nor help us live out the mandate of Christ. While such an entity may appear to represent Catholic belief, they are not the voice of Catholic teaching.

We convey our thanks and our heartfelt admiration for all those members of Congress who stood strongly on their principles. To do so was courageous and provided one with an example of standing solidly for the values espoused by Jesus and the church, in spite of personal criticism. We are especially grateful that all members of our Louisiana Congressional delegation voted against this bill.

Many questions remain concerning the executive order that President Obama has promised to sign. It is important to note that an executive order can be changed with the stroke of a pen, and as many legal experts have asserted, the language of a law will take precedence over anything contained within an executive order in the case of a court challenge. If the case would ultimately be brought to the U.S. Supreme Court, it is uncertain how the justices would vote in defending innocent human life. This new law stands to encourage even more abortions in the future, and signals that we as Catholic bishops will have to take a very close look at Catholic health care.

Please join us in prayer that we may courageously stand for Gospel values and encourage a culture of life within the United States. God bless America.



The Most Rev. Gregory M. Aymond  
Archbishop of New Orleans  
The Most Rev. Ronald P. Herzog  
Bishop of Alexandria  
The Most Rev. Robert W. Muench  
Bishop of Baton Rouge  
The Most Rev. Sam G. Jacobs  
Bishop of Houma-Thibodaux

The Most Rev. Michael Jarrell  
Bishop of Lafayette  
The Most Rev. Glen John Provost  
Bishop of Lake Charles  
The Most Rev. Michael G. Duca  
Bishop of Shreveport  
The Most Rev. Shelton J. Fabre  
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