



COLORADO CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

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Colorado Catholic Conference 2021 Legislative Recap

On June 8, the First Regular Session of the 73rd General Assembly adjourned. Over 600 bills were introduced this session. Policy primarily focused on transportation, agriculture, healthcare, fiscal policy, and the state budget. However, the legislature also considered and passed many bills that could impact the Catholic Church in Colorado.

Some bills that were passed will uphold Catholic social teaching and protect the poor and vulnerable of our society while others pose potentially harmful consequences to the Catholic Church, its affiliated organizations, and Colorado citizens who wish to practice their well-founded convictions. There were also many bills that were considered by the legislature that did not pass, including two bills that would have upheld the sanctity of life and two that would have expanded education opportunity for K-12 students.

The Colorado Catholic Conference (CCC), as the united voice of the four Colorado bishops, advocated for Catholic values at the Capitol and ensured that the Church's voice was heard in the shaping of policy.

Below is a recap of the CCC's 19 priority bills from the 2021 legislative session. For a full list of the legislation the Conference worked on, please visit:

<https://www.cocatholicconference.org/2021-legislative-bills-analysis/>

For regular updates and other information, please sign-up for the CCC legislative network here:

<https://www.cocatholicconference.org/news/email-alerts/>

Six Bills the CCC Supported That Were Either Passed or Enacted

Note: Passed means the bill was approved by both chambers of the legislature and is pending the governor's signature as of June 9, 2021. Enacted means the bill was signed by the governor and became law.

1. HB 21-1011 Multilingual Ballot Access for Voters – Passed

If enacted, counties where either 2,000 adults or 2.5 percent of the adult population primarily speak a language other than English will be required to provide a ballot in that language.

2. HB 21-1075 Replace The Term Illegal Alien– Enacted

With the enactment of HB 1075, the term "illegal alien" was replaced with the term "worker without authorization" as it relates to public contracts for services.

3. **SB 21-027 Emergency Supplies for Colorado Babies and Families – Passed**
If enacted, the state government will allocate much-needed funding for nonprofit organizations to provide diapers and other childcare necessities to families in need, including Catholic Charities.
4. **SB 21-077 Remove Lawful Presence Verification Credentialing – Enacted**
With the enactment of SB 77, verification of lawful presence will no longer be required for any applicant for a license, certificate, or registration, particularly in the job fields of education and childcare.
5. **SB 21-146 Improve Prison Release Outcomes – Passed**
If enacted, SB 146 will establish practices that ease the transition back into society for formerly incarcerated persons.
6. **SB 21-158 Increase Medical Providers for Senior Citizens – Passed**
If enacted, SB 158 will allocate more funding for senior citizen care, which is currently understaffed and underfunded.

Eight Bills the CCC Opposed that Were Passed

1. **HB 21-1072 Equal Access Services For Out-of-home Placements – Enacted**
With the enactment of HB 1072, Colorado law now prohibits organizations that receive state funding to place children with adoptive or foster parents from discriminating on, among other things, the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or marital status. This new law will likely be impacted by the imminent *Fulton v. City of Philadelphia* US Supreme Court decision.
2. **HB 21-1108 Gender Identity Expression Anti-Discrimination – Enacted**
With the enactment of HB 1108, “sexual orientation,” “gender identity,” and “gender expression” are now recognized as protected classes in Colorado nondiscrimination code. This may have serious religious liberty implications for individuals and organizations that wish to practice their well-founded convictions on marriage and human sexuality.
3. **SB21-006 Human Remains Natural Reduction Soil – Enacted**
With the enactment of SB 006, human remains can now be converted to soil using a container that accelerates the process of biological decomposition, also known as "natural reduction."
4. **SB 21-009 Reproductive Health Care Program – Passed**
If enacted, SB 009 will create a taxpayer funded state program to increase access to contraceptives.

5. **SB 21-016 Protecting Preventive Health Care Coverage – Passed**
If enacted, the definition of “family planning services” and “family planning-related services” will not be clearly defined in law, and could potentially include abortion. Furthermore, SB 16 removes the requirement that a provider obtain parental consent before providing family planning services to a minor.
6. **SB 21-025 Family Planning Services for Eligible Individuals – Passed**
If enacted, SB 025 low-income women to be given state-funded contraception, “preventing, delaying, or planning pregnancy” services, which includes cessation services and sterilization services.
7. **SB 21-142 Health Care Access in Cases of Rape or Incest – Enacted**
The enactment of SB 142 removes the requirement that, if public funds are being used, a physician must perform an abortion at a hospital, and instead allows for abortions to be performed by any “licensed provider.”
8. **SB21-193 Protection of Pregnant People in Perinatal Period – Passed**
If enacted, SB 193 will eliminate an important protection in Colorado law for a preborn and viable baby when a woman is on life support.

Five Bills the CCC Supported That Failed

1. **HB21-1017 Protect Human Life at Conception – Failed**
HB 1017 would have prohibited terminating the life of an unborn child and made it a violation a class 1 felony.
2. **HB 21-1080 Nonpublic Education and COVID-19 Relief Act – Failed**
HB 1080 would have established a private school and home-based education income tax credit for families who either enroll their child in private school or educate their child at home, thereby expanding education opportunities for families during and after the pandemic.
3. **HB 21-1183 Induced Termination of Pregnancy State Registrar – Failed**
HB 1183 would have required health-care providers that perform abortions to report specified information concerning the women who obtain the procedure to the state registrar of vital statistics, thereby increasing transparency in the abortion industry.
4. **HB 21-1191 Prohibit Discrimination COVID-19 Vaccine Status – Failed**
HB 1191 would have prevented individuals from being coerced to take the COVID-19 vaccine by either the state or by employers.

5. **HB 21-1210 Modifications to Qualified State Tuition Programs – Failed**

HB 1210 would have allowed families to use some of their private 529 savings account funds for private K-12 school tuition for their children, including at Catholic schools.

One Bill the CCC Opposed That Failed

1. **SB 21-031 Limits on Governmental Responses to Protests – Failed**

SB 031 would have made it more difficult for law enforcement to protect innocent lives when protests turn violent.

Two Bills the CCC Was in an “Amend” Position That Passed

1. **SB 21-073 Civil Action Statute of Limitations Sexual Assault – Enacted**

With the enactment of SB 073, the statute of limitations on bringing a civil claim based on sexual misconduct will be removed as of January 1, 2022. Under this law, victims of sexual abuse can pursue a civil cause of action if the statute of limitations has not expired, the abuse happened in Colorado, and the abuse could be considered a felony or Class 1 misdemeanor if it was a criminal case.

2. **SB 21-088 Child Sexual Abuse Accountability Act – Passed**

If enacted, SB 88 will allow victims of childhood sexual abuse to sue public and private institutions for abuse that occurred between 1960-2022. Victims would have three years to bring a historical claim, starting from January 1, 2022. Claims brought during this window would be capped at \$387,000 for public institutions and at \$500,000 for private institutions, with the ability of a judge to double the damages depending on how the private institution handled the situation. Despite unanswered constitutional concerns regarding SB 88, the Colorado Catholic dioceses will also continue to offer opportunities for survivors of childhood sexual abuse to receive support in a non-litigious setting.

While the legislature has adjourned the 2021 legislative session, there is still the possibility that they will reconvene later this year. To stay up-to-date on Colorado legislative issues and their impact on the Catholic Church in Colorado, be sure to sign up for the CCC legislative network here: <https://www.cocatholicconference.org/news/email-alerts/>