



**Statement
of the
Administrative Committee
National Conference of Catholic Bishops
on the
Anti-Abortion Amendment
*September 18, 1973***

The Administrative Committee of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops reaffirms its commitment to a constitutional amendment in defense of unborn human life. While abortion transcends legal and constitutional issues and involves fundamental questions of individual and social morality, a constitutional amendment is now the only viable means to correct the disastrous legal situation created by the Supreme Court's rulings on abortion.

We therefore urge early hearings in the Senate and House on pending constitutional amendments to protect the unborn. We also urge pro-life supporters to call on their senators and representatives to support congressional hearings at an early date.

We are strongly encouraged by the fact that numerous pro-life amendments have been introduced in both houses of Congress. We commend the many members of Congress who have sponsored such amendments. In view of the evidence of widespread popular and congressional support for an amendment, we feel that prompt and positive congressional consideration is in order.

Furthermore, independent of the hearings, we recognize the need for grassroots pro-life organization on behalf of such an amendment. Local action can render an essential service: for example, by public information programs on the subject of abortion, by contacts with congressmen, and by encouragement to state legislatures to petition Congress--as several have

done--on behalf of a constitutional amendment. Men and women of good will, regardless of creed, who support the cause of human life must prepare now to make an effective, united, long-term effort.

The complex legal issues relating to an amendment are now under intensive and continuing study by the bishops' conference and by the legal staff and advisors of the United States Catholic Conference. At present we do not single out any specific pending amendment. Our detailed views regarding the wording of an amendment will be stated at an early date, in the context of congressional hearings or some other appropriate forum. Our immediate concern, however, is that Congress take action to insure prompt and favorable consideration of this urgent matter and that pro-life individuals and groups prepare now for the supportive action which will be necessary to win congressional approval and ultimate ratification of an amendment.

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