

Tuesday, February 28, 2006 (202) 225-3661

House Democrats Release Historic

Catholic Statement of Principles

Expresses Commitment to Dignity of Life and Belief that Government Has 'Moral Purpose' WASHINGTON, D.C. - A majority of Catholic Democrats in the U.S. House led by Congresswoman Rosa L. DeLauro (Conn.-3) today released a statement of principles. Signed by 55 House Democrats, the statement documents how their faith influences them as lawmakers, making clear their commitment to the basic principles at the heart of Catholic social teaching and their bearing on policy - whether it is increasing access to education for all or pressing for real health care reform, taking seriously the decision to go to war, or reducing poverty. Above all, the document expresses the signers' commitment to the dignity of life and their belief that government has moral purpose.

The full text of the statement and the complete list of signers follow. Statement of Principles By Fifty-Five Catholic Democrats in the U.S. House of Representatives As Catholic Democrats in Congress, we are proud to be part of the living Catholic tradition -- a tradition that promotes the common good, expresses a consistent moral framework for life and highlights the need to provide a collective safety net to those individuals in society who are most in need. As legislators, in the U.S. House of Representatives, we work every day to advance respect for life and the dignity of every human being. We believe that government has moral purpose. We are committed to making real the basic principles that are at the heart of Catholic social teaching: helping the poor and disadvantaged, protecting the most vulnerable among us, and ensuring that all Americans of every faith are given meaningful opportunities to share in the blessings of this great country. That commitment is fulfilled in different ways by legislators but includes: reducing the rising rates of poverty; increasing access to education for all; pressing for increased access to health care; and taking seriously the decision to go to war. Each of these issues challenges our obligations as Catholics to community and helping those in need. We envision a world in which every child belongs to a loving family and agree with the Catholic Church about the value of human life and the undesirability of abortion-we do not celebrate its practice. Each of us is committed to reducing the number of unwanted pregnancies and creating an environment with policies that encourage pregnancies to be carried to term. We believe this includes promoting alternatives to abortion, such as adoption, and improving access to children's healthcare and child care, as well as policies that encourage paternal and maternal responsibility. In all these issues, we seek the Church's guidance and assistance but believe also in the primacy of conscience. In recognizing the Church's role in providing moral leadership, we acknowledge and accept the tension that comes with being in disagreement with the Church in some areas. Yet we believe we can speak to the fundamental issues that unite us as Catholics and lend our voices to changing the political debate -- a debate that often fails to reflect and encompass the depth and complexity of these issues.

As legislators, we are charged with preserving the Constitution, which guarantees religious freedom for all Americans. In doing so, we guarantee our right to live our own lives as Catholics, but also foster an America with a rich diversity of faiths. We believe the separation of church and state allows for our faith to inform our public duties. As Catholic Democrats who embrace the vocation and mission of the laity as expressed by Pope John Paul II in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Christifideles Laici*, we believe that the Church is the "people of God," called to be a moral force in the broadest sense. We believe the Church as a community is called to be in the vanguard of creating a more just America and world. And as such, we have a claim on the Church's bearing as it does on ours.

Rosa L. DeLauro David R. Obey
Wm. Lacy Clay Hilda L. Solis
James R. Langevin Bart Stupak
Anna Eshoo Bill Pascrell
Betty McCollum Gene Taylor
Raul M. Grijalva Carolyn McCarthy
John B. Larson Ed Pastor
Joe Baca William Delahunt
Tim Ryan Silvestre Reyes
Mike Thompson Linda T. Sanchez
Charles A. Gonzalez Xavier Becerra
Diane Watson Michael H. Michaud
Nydia Velazquez Jim Marshall
Frank Pallone John T. Salazar
James P. McGovern George Miller
Tim Holden James L. Oberstar
Dale E. Kildee Patrick J. Kennedy
Cynthia McKinney James P. Moran
Michael Capuano Richard E. Neal
Mike Doyle Peter A. DeFazio
Maurice Hinchey Dennis A. Cardoza
Joseph Crowley Jim Costa
Lucille Roybal-Allard Loretta Sanchez
Robert Brady Marty Meehan
Grace Napolitano Luis V. Gutierrez
Jose Serrano Stephen Lynch
Edward J. Markey Nancy Pelosi
Lane Evans