



Washington State Catholic Conference

The Public Policy Voice of the Bishops of Washington State

WSCC Newsletter for Catholic Schools

Fall 2025

As the public policy voice of the five bishops of Washington state, the Washington State Catholic Conference (WSCC) advocates for policies that serve the common good and recognize the dignity of every human person. Our advocacy is guided by Catholic Social Teaching, and supporting Catholic schools and education is a key goal of our mission.

Federal Educational Choice and Washington State

The Educational Choice for Children Act was introduced by Rep. Adrian Smith from Nebraska. It created a fund with a \$10 billion annual cap that individuals and corporations could contribute to for a tax credit equal to their contribution. Students in families living up to 300% of the regional median income would be eligible for the funds. The bill included strong protections for religious liberty and parental autonomy.

Provisions of the bill were included in the House budget reconciliation package, with some important changes. First, rather than being a mandate, each state must opt into the program. While the bill is not explicit, it is expected that governors will be the ones to opt in by notifying the federal Treasury Department by Jan. 1, 2027. States that do choose to participate have some power to shape the way the program operates within their state, raising questions that have yet to be answered about the ability of a state to exclude religious schools. Much still depends on rules to be written by Treasury to guide implementation of the program.

The final version of the program provides up to a \$1700 credit per taxpayer for contributions made to scholarship granting organizations (SGO). The SGOs provide the funds received through contributions to families to pay for a range of approved expenses, including private school tuition, tutoring, services for students with disabilities, transportation or other expenses that may be incurred by children in public or private schools. Families making up to 300% of the local median income qualify for the scholarship funds (estimates suggest 80-90% of families will be eligible based on this threshold).



It is unclear how much funding will be available for scholarships. The \$1,700 limit on contributions will require more participants to max out their contributions versus the earlier bill that would have allowed a large corporation or wealthy individual to make multi-million dollar contributions, potentially slowing the process for growing scholarship funds.

In Washington state, it seems likely that Superintendent of Public Instruction Chris Reykdal will encourage Gov. Ferguson to oppose opting into the scholarship program, despite the state's massive budget woes and the reality that the program could provide substantial non-governmental funding for both public and private schools, depending on how parents seek to use the scholarships. Advocacy from lower income parents striving to ensure their students have equal access to schools, services and programs that will help their students achieve success will be critically important.

In the coming months, the WSCC will be developing messaging and strategies to encourage Gov. Ferguson to opt into the scholarship program. [Sign up for the WSCC Advocacy Bulletin](#) to learn more and join in advocacy for this program utilizing private contributions to improve educational outcomes for all students.

Register for the next installments in our webinar series

As we approach Respect life month in October, the WSCC offers Catholics a number of opportunities to dive deeper into our doctrine on specific life issues. Please join us for any or all of the following (please note, registration links are unique to each specific webinar):

WSCC Washington State Catholic Conference
Life, Justice, Peace.

WEBINAR

UNDERSTANDING THE INTERSECTION OF CATHOLIC MORAL TEACHING AND MIGRATION

THURSDAY 10/18/2023
NOON 1:00 PM

Dr. Todd Scribner will examine the ways in which the Catholic moral tradition informs Church teaching on migration and provides guidance to Catholics who engage the issue in the public square. He will provide an overview of migration policy considering current events and highlight some of the ways that Church leadership has responded to these developments.

GUEST SPEAKER
TODD SCRIBNER
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, EDUCATION & OUTREACH, MIGRANT AND REFUGEE SERVICES (AMRS)

[REGISTER NOW](#)
<https://bit.ly/4j6ZWeI>

Visit the website: wacatholics.org

September 18, Noon: Dr. Todd Scribner, Assistant Director of Education and Outreach, Migrant and Refugee Services for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops will examine the ways in which the Catholic moral tradition informs Church teaching on migration and provides guidance to Catholics who engage the issue in the public square. He will provide an overview of migration policy considering current events and highlight some of the ways that Church leadership has responded to these developments. [REGISTER](#)

WSCC Washington State Catholic Conference
Life, Justice, Peace.

WEBINAR

LIFE AND ABORTION DON'T ALWAYS GO AS PLANNED

THURSDAY 10/11/2023
NOON 1:00 PM

In *Abortion Doesn't Always Go as Planned*, Melissa Ohden sheds light on the reality of failed abortions, exploring which methods fail, how often it happens, and the profound impact on the woman, the surviving child, and their families, as well as our culture. She highlights the emotional, physical, and psychological challenges they face, the critical support they need, and practical ways people can help those affected by an abortion that didn't go as planned.

GUEST SPEAKER
MELISSA OHDEN
FOUNDER AND CEO, THE ABORTION SURVIVOR'S NETWORK

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<https://bit.ly/3G3qIWg>

Visit the website: wacatholics.org

October 7, Noon: In *Abortion Doesn't Always Go as Planned*, Melissa Ohden, founder and CEO of Abortion Survivor's Network, sheds light on the reality of failed abortions, exploring which methods fail, how often it happens, and the profound impact on the woman, the surviving child, and their families, as well as our culture. She highlights the emotional, physical, and psychological challenges they face, the critical support they need, and practical ways people can help those affected by an abortion that didn't go as planned. [REGISTER](#)

WSCC Washington State Catholic Conference
Life, Justice, Peace.

WEBINAR

THE STATE OF THE US DEATH PENALTY 2025

THURSDAY 10/11/2023
1:00 PM 2:00 PM

The State of the US Death Penalty 2025 explores national trends in capital punishment, including recent federal commutations and state-level shifts. The webinar will also reflect on Catholic teaching and how the faith community is responding to the continued use of the death penalty in the U.S.

GUEST SPEAKER
EMMAJOLEE MENDOZA WATERS
DIRECTOR OF DEATH PENALTY ABOLITION, CATHOLIC MOBILIZING NETWORK

[REGISTER NOW](#)
<https://bit.ly/42g1dd0>

Visit the website: wacatholics.org

October 9, 1:00 PM: "The State of the US Death Penalty 2025" explores national trends in capital punishment, including recent federal commutations and state-level shifts. The webinar will also reflect on Catholic teaching and how the faith community is responding to the continued use of the death penalty in the U.S. Learn more with Emmajolee Mendoza Waters, Director of Death Penalty Abolition at Catholics Mobilizing Network. [REGISTER](#)

WSCC Washington State Catholic Conference
Life, Justice, Peace.

WEBINAR
ISLANDS OF MEAT: HOW THE CHURCH IS BRINGING FAITH AND HOPE TO DISADVANTAGED PEOPLE IN WESTERN WASHINGTON

THURSDAY OCT 13, 2023 NOON 1:00 PM

Catholics have a crucial role in building a culture of life. Through being instruments of healing and hope and accompanying our neighbors, we can help transform the lives of people struggling to say "yes" to the greatest of all: the greatest challenges.

GUEST SPEAKER
ALEAH PATULOT
DIRECTOR OF MISSION ENGAGEMENT
CATHOLIC COMMUNITY SERVICES OF WESTERN WASHINGTON

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<https://bit.ly/3XHKtlf>

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October 16, Noon: Catholics have a crucial role in building a culture of life. Through being instruments of healing and hope and accompanying our neighbors, we can help transform the lives of people struggling to say "yes" to life amidst some of life's greatest challenges. Join Aleah Patulot, Director of Mission Engagement for Catholic Community Services of Western Washington to learn how. [REGISTER](#)

WSCC Washington State Catholic Conference
Life, Justice, Peace.

WEBINAR
ASSISTED SUICIDE: THE ETHICS, THE LAW, AND THE DANGERS

THURSDAY OCT 23, 2023 NOON 1:00 PM

Assisting in other people's suicides violates the universal moral principle against deliberately helping to take innocent human life, and the medical profession's fundamental norm "first, do no harm." As laws are changed to remove initial safeguards against abuse and coercion, the reality of a "slippery slope" toward broader killing has become clear.

GUEST SPEAKER
RICHARD DOERFLINGER
RECORDS MANAGER, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
OF THE SECRETARIAT OF PRO-LIFE ACTIVITIES FOR THE USCCB

REGISTER NOW
<https://bit.ly/3E6fmUQ>

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October 23, Noon: Assisting in other people's suicides violates the universal moral principle against deliberately helping to take innocent human life, and the medical profession's fundamental norm "First of all, do no harm." As laws are changed to remove initial safeguards against abuse and coercion, the reality of a "slippery slope" toward broader killing has become clear. Richard Doerflinger, former Executive Director of the Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, will delve into our Catholic response. [REGISTER](#)

WSCC Washington State Catholic Conference
Life, Justice, Peace.

WEBINAR
DYING TO CONCEIVE: IVF VERSUS RESTORATIVE REPRODUCTIVE MEDICINE

THURSDAY OCT 28, 2023 NOON 1:00 PM

In a world where infertility is on the rise, where the desire for children is natural and good, and where God commanded us to "be fruitful and multiply," how ought people of good will respond when conception just isn't happening? How should we think, and talk, about infertility and its various medical responses, in a way that is ethical and compassionate? Learn more at this seminar with international speaker and author, Stephanie Gray Connors.

GUEST SPEAKER
STEPHANIE GRAY CONNORS
INTERNATIONAL SPEAKER AND AUTHOR

REGISTER NOW
<https://bit.ly/4idsDAd>

WACATHOLICS.ORG

October 28, Noon: In a world where infertility is on the rise, where the desire for children is natural and good, and where God commanded us to "be fruitful and multiply," how ought people of good will respond when conception just isn't happening? How should we think, and talk, about infertility and its various medical responses, in a way that is ethical and compassionate? Learn more at this seminar with international speaker and author, Stephanie Gray Connors. [REGISTER](#)



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Join the [Washington State Catholic Conference](#) in year-round advocacy. Receive our monthly Catholic Advocacy Bulletin and find us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

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