

VIRGINIA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE



Dear Friends:

Over the next two weeks, one issue on which the Virginia Catholic Conference will continue to work especially hard is ensuring that biotechnology legislation includes safeguards against research that requires destroying a human embryo or aborting a baby. Sadly, such research now exists, and although biotech companies that are interested in the legislation described below say that's not the type of research they're interested in doing, they have fought very hard against repeated attempts by the VCC (some successful, others not) to add protective language to the legislation at various stages of the debate. This debate has taken many twists and turns and has now reached a critical moment.

We will need a major outpouring of grassroots support over the next week or two to ensure that the sanctity of life is safeguarded in whatever legislation is ultimately approved. Therefore, I would ask that you consider sending the alert that appears below to any e-mail list of parishioners that your parish may have, or including the alert in the parish bulletin (this weekend if at all possible, but if that deadline has passed then the weekend of Feb. 21-22 should still be effective).

Thank you very much for considering this. I believe that what happens on this issue over the next two weeks will determine to a large extent whether our state is willing to draw clear ethical boundaries on research in the future.

Very gratefully,

Jeff Caruso
Executive Director



Critical Respect Life Alert: Virginia's legislature is debating three bills to boost state biotechnology investment. While saying they are not interested in using the legislation to pursue life-destructive research, biotech organizations have repeatedly resisted including bioethical safeguards. **It is critical that provisions be included in all three bills to make sure they do not become vehicles for state sponsorship of embryo-destructive research or research on aborted babies.**

The Virginia Catholic Conference, which is the legislative advocacy office of Arlington Bishop Paul Loverde and Richmond Bishop Francis DiLorenzo, has prepared an alert to provide parishioners throughout the Commonwealth a very easy way to play a role in this critical debate. To let your state Delegate and Senator know of your strong support for bioethical protections to uphold the sanctity of life, please visit the Conference's website, www.vacatholic.org. At the top of the site is a link to an alert that includes a pre-written message that could be sent "as is" or edited to suit your own style. Upon clicking "Send Message," your message would be automatically routed to your own Delegate and Senator in the Virginia General Assembly (through a system that uses your residential address to determine your House and Senate districts).

Taking action takes just a minute or two and provides very important input to those who represent you.
Please act!