



## CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF SOUTHERN ILLINOIS

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Greetings from the Catholic Charities of Southern Illinois!

The occasion of this letter is the current threat to continuing the foster care and adoption programs of Catholic Social Services (CSS) due to the decision of the state to not continue their contracts. More details on that will be included in a separate letter from the Executive Director of CSS, Gary Huelsmann. The purpose of this letter is twofold. First, to clear any confusion related to the media incorrectly referring to CSS as Catholic Charities. Secondly, to express support to CSS and those they serve.

To the first point, the confusion is understandable in some measure because in the case of many dioceses in the United States, and here in Illinois, the foster care and adoption programs are served through their Catholic Charities agencies. However, local Catholic Charities have a range of structures. In the case of the Diocese of Belleville we have networking coalition model for Catholic Charities of Southern Illinois (CCSIL).

The model of CCSIL is one of a network of three coalitions (currently, Christian Ministry, Pastoral Ministry, and Elder Services) composed of agencies and departments of the Diocese of Belleville. There is a board of directors made up of members of each coalition and representatives at large to help facilitate the goals of CCSIL, such as increased interagency communication and collaboration, remaining connected to Catholic Charities USA, and being attentive to all regions of the diocese. The direct work of ministry/service takes place through the member agencies of CCSIL, as CCSIL has no operational responsibility or authority over the member agencies. (For more detailed information please see the CCSIL brochure.)

Catholic Social Services, the provider of the foster care and adoption programs in the diocese, as well as a number of other programs, is a member agency of Catholic Charities of Southern Illinois, included in the Christian Ministry Coalition. They are the party (not CCSIL), together with several other Illinois Catholic Diocese providers of these services – in those cases their local Catholic Charities – involved in the above referenced struggle.

To the second point of this letter, as part of one Catholic community in the Diocese of Belleville, CCSIL wants to express and encourage active support of CSS in the current struggle to fulfill their goal of serving children/families in need of foster care and adoption, with the full protection of conscience that is consistent with religious liberty. This is an issue that is critical to all of us.

Please take the time to be fully informed, to take action as appropriate, and to pray for the children, families, staff of Catholic Social Services, and the legal team and others working with them.

Thank you,

Laurie Edwards,  
CCSIL Board of Directors, Chair