

# An Open Letter from Catholic State Legislators To Our Colleagues in the US House of Representatives

This is a different kind of “Dear Colleague” letter. **We, Catholic state legislators from across the country, are writing to you, our fellow legislators in Washington, DC, to do the right thing for American families and support H.R. 3312, the Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion, and Supporting Parents Act.**

Families in our districts are facing unprecedented challenges. Factories are closing, homes are being foreclosed on, jobs eliminated, small businesses shutting their doors. **Parents are facing choices between groceries or education; between healthcare for them or for their children.** And those of us elected to make things right—or at least possible—for these families are facing our own challenges. Budgets are tight and the endless partisan and ideological battles continue to get in the way of passing legislation that could make a difference.

You have the opportunity in this 111<sup>th</sup> Congress to make a change, to help people have real choices and real prospects for the future. **H.R. 3312**, the Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion, and Supporting Parents Act **cosponsored by Representatives Tim Ryan (OH) and Rosa DeLauro (CT)** is designed to meet some of the most basic needs of American families.

This legislation **speaks to many concerns we have both as elected public servants and as Catholics.** Our faith tradition calls us to have a preferential option for the poor. As do you, we represent a range of people from different economic conditions with a range of faith beliefs or no religious belief. However, we do believe we have a special responsibility to speak for those who have little or no voice in the political process. They are the families who are the hardest hit by the economic crisis, who have the least resources to draw upon as we wait for the better times we know are ahead.

**We are also representative of Catholics across the nation who support policies that enable women to make decisions about whether to become pregnant, or whether to continue a pregnancy.** As Catholics, we also strive to **support parents who find themselves facing hard times**, giving them access to the resources they need to provide for their families.

The **Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion, and Supporting Parents Act** does this in many ways that uphold the right of our constituents, and yours, to support their families in ways that make the most sense for them. It **helps end a cycle of poverty for families that are already struggling** by providing funding for pregnancy prevention programs, including the federal Title X program and expanded Medicaid coverage. It funds programs that provide age-appropriate, evidence-based sexuality education to help teach young people about avoiding unplanned pregnancies. Too often, these pregnancies result in young women and men leaving school to seek jobs that are scarce, at best, and pay barely enough to afford the basics for them and their children.

We are your fellow legislators and your constituents. **We will do our part in the states, and urge you, our colleagues in the US House of Representatives, to do yours.** This is an opportunity to show that the cynicism about government is not well-founded, to show that we can stand together despite economic hurdles and partisan differences to deliver real help to people across the nation.

**Help the American people with common sense legislation, like the Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion, and Supporting Parents Act, that realizes the promises we all made when we were elected.**

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