

2018 PETITION ON THE DREAM ACT

Although no new legislation on the Dream Act was passed in 2018, multiple court cases have continued to move the issue forward. In August, the Washington, DC, District Court ruled that the government will not have to accept new DACA applications but it will have to continue to accept renewal applications. Appeals continue and a Supreme Court case is likely.

Get up-to-date alerts on legislative issues!

Join the Catholic Action Network at www.nyscatholic.org

DIOCESAN PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE (DPPC)

Bishop Salvatore Matano appoints the Public Policy Committee to assist him in determining diocesan public policy priorities and to develop an implementation plan.

Chairperson: Rev. Daniel J. Condon	Chancellor, Diocese of Rochester
Committee Members: Jack Balinsky	Diocesan Director, Catholic Charities
Carolann Darling	Immaculate Conception, Ithaca
Ann Marie Deutsch	Catholic Schools
Marcus John Ebenhoe	Cathedral Community
Mark Keller	St. Kateri, Irondequoit
Judith Kiehl	Pax Christi
Sister Janet Korn, RSM	Sisters of Mercy
Doug Mandelaro	Diocesan Communications Director
Dcn. Nick Valvo	Sacred Heart/St. Anne, Auburn
Ellen Durrigan Santora	St. Paul, Webster
Jessica Shanahan	Pregnancy Care Program
Mary M. Smith	St. Boniface, Rochester
Sister Phyllis Tierney, SSJ	Sisters of St. Joseph
Dcn. Nicholas Valvo	Sacred Heart/St. Anne, Auburn

Justice & Peace Ministry Staff of Catholic Charities (*denotes DPPC membership)

Monroe: Ruth Marchetti 585-546-7220 ext. 7099; RMarchetti@cfcrochester.org

Chemung/Schuyler/Tioga: Kathy Dubel* 607-734-9784 ext. 2135; Kathy.Dubel@dor.org

Cayuga/Ontario/ Seneca/Yates/Wayne: Jean-Paul Kandolo* 315-789-2686 ext. 112; Jean.Paul.Kandolo@dor.org

Livingston: Tabitha Brewster 585-658-4466 ext. 13; Tabitha.Brewster@dor.org

Steuben: Tess McKinley 607-776-8085 ext. 217; Tess.Mckinley@dor.org

Tompkins: Laurie Konwinski* 607-272-5062 ext. 12; Laurie.Konwinski@dor.org

Life Issues Coordinator: Suzanne Stack* 585-328-3228 ext. 1304; Suzanne.Stack@dor.org

1150 Buffalo Road • Rochester, NY 14624 • (585) 328-3210 / (800) 388-7177
<https://www.dor.org/about/office-ministry-directory/catholic-charities/public-policy-committee/>

ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER



2019 PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

There are many who find politics uncomfortable, but being engaged, responsible citizens is part of our obligation both as citizens and as Catholics. The world needs people who help to shape our communities, not for any partisan bias, but because they heed our Savior's call to compassion and respect for the dignity of all people.

This year our Diocesan Public Policy Committee draws our attention to four deeply concerning issues:

- The exclusion of farmworkers from the basic labor rights that the rest of us take for granted;
- The U.S. Bishops' recently issued pastoral letter on racism;
- The continuing tragedy of the opioid epidemic; and
- The movement to pass an extreme abortion bill in New York State.

Because the abortion legislation is likely to move quickly through the legislative chambers in January, I draw your attention to it now and ask that you prepare to respond quickly when asked in early January.

According to the New York State Catholic Conference, the Executive Branch leadership and the majority leadership in the New York State Legislature have promised to enact the "Reproductive Health Act" early in 2019. What is not stated is that this bill goes much farther than just to "codify" Roe v. Wade in New York State. The Reproductive Health Act (RHA) would make abortion less safe and more expansive than it is now. Sadly, the abortion rate in New York State is already more than twice the national average. This would have detrimental consequences for pregnant women and their unborn children, allowing non-doctors to perform abortions and permitting abortions for any reason in the third trimester of pregnancy right up to a mother's due date. It would remove all criminal penalties for abortion, including acting against the mother's will as in the intentional targeting of an unborn child in an act of domestic violence. It would remove our state's protections for infants accidentally born alive in the course of an abortion. It is our duty as believers in Jesus to support life and the courageous women who seek our pastoral assistance as they deal with complex life issues.

When life is threatened in any way, whether by abortion, racism, drug addiction or poverty, Catholics are called to speak up and stand with those who are being oppressed. Please support the work of our Public Policy Committee.

Rejoicing in God's gift of life and His creation, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Salvatore R. Matano

The Most Reverend Salvatore R. Matano
Bishop of Rochester



EDUCATION PRIORITIES

SHARE THE JOURNEY: LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

The Diocese of Rochester's Public Policy Committee will continue to participate in Pope Francis' global call/initiative to *Share the Journey: Love Your Neighbor*. This initiative seeks to promote the virtue of solidarity and deepen our understanding of and compassion for the realities faced by brothers and sisters around the world who are uprooted and seek refuge from violence, conflict, oppression and persecution.

Likewise, this call to love our neighbor prompts us to respond to the invitation of our U.S. Catholic Bishops to address the sin of racism in our own country. In their recently released pastoral letter against racism entitled, *Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call To Love*, our Bishops find inspiration in the words of the prophet Micah: "You have been told, O mortal, what is good, and what the Lord requires of you: only to do justice and to love goodness and to walk humbly with your God." (Mi 6:8)

Resources for prayer, faith formation, and dialogue will be available during 2019.

RESPONDING TO THE OPIOID CRISIS

The Opioid epidemic continues to ravage the lives of individuals and families. In 2017, 197 Americans died every day from an Opioid overdose. Drug overdose deaths have become the leading cause of death for those under the age of 50. The Diocesan Public Policy Committee believes that as caring and compassionate Catholic communities, we are called to respond to this continuing need to address this disease which is impacting our own faith community and our communities at large.

Many parishes offered educational and support programs in 2018. We encourage more parishes to engage in these efforts. Here are some ways parishes might address this continuing epidemic:

- Develop understanding of the disease of addiction, creating compassion and support for those impacted individuals and families.
- Obtain training in the use of Narcan, the overdose reversal drug.
- Support recovery programs and collaborate with local agencies that are addressing this crisis.
- Provide addiction-prevention programs for youth.
- Consider how existing parish ministries could support individuals and families impacted by the Opioid Crisis.

Please contact your regional justice and peace coordinator to schedule programs.

THE ABORTION EXPANSION ACT: LIVES IN THE BALANCE

The Executive Branch leadership and the majority leadership in the New York State Legislature have promised to enact the "Reproductive Health Act" early in 2019. Currently, abortion is legal in New York State for any reason up to 24 weeks of pregnancy, and any time after that if the mother's life is at risk. So even if *Roe v. Wade* were to be over-turned, the vast majority of abortions in our state would continue to be legal and available. The Reproductive Health Act (RHA) would make abortion less safe and more expansive than it is now.

Efforts are underway to write to the Governor and New York State Legislators with emails opposing this extreme bill as soon as the Legislative Session starts in early January. Catholics are also encouraged to get involved by praying, providing women experiencing an unplanned pregnancy with information on resource centers that offer alternatives to abortion and other practical assistance, providing those suffering from an abortion with abortion healing ministry resources, and building the culture of life through words, actions, and mentoring our youth. Learn more at www.nyscatholic.org.

DIOCESAN-WIDE PARISH-BASED ADVOCACY PUBLIC POLICY WEEKEND FEBRUARY 9 & 10, 2019

FARMWORKER FAIR LABOR PRACTICES ACT

21. "... the right to work can be infringed when the farmworkers are denied the possibility of sharing in decisions concerning their services, or when they are denied the right to free association with a view to their just advancement socially, culturally and economically."

—*LABOREM EXERCENS, St. Pope John Paul II*

For over 125 years ago, beginning with Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum* and throughout the 20th century, the Catholic Church has taught that workers have the right to decent pay and working conditions befitting their human dignity, and the right to organize to ensure this just treatment. Here in the Diocese of Rochester, we have for years stood with a specific group of workers whose rights have not been respected, the farmworkers who harvest crops and tend livestock throughout our State.

For decades these workers have been excluded from basic human and legal rights, economic opportunities, and respect. They are isolated from the general community by language, geography, and prejudice. They live in poverty, performing exhausting and often dangerous labor for long hours.

These conditions are due in part to New York State law. New York labor law categorically denies farmworkers the basic rights and protections enjoyed by virtually all other workers. These exclusions mean that farmworkers do not have the right to a guaranteed day of rest per week, overtime pay, disability insurance, or protections while bargaining collectively.



This year, our Diocesan Public Policy Committee is asking the faithful to speak up for farmworkers by petitioning their state elected officials to support the Farmworker Fair Labor Practices Act. This bill would end the exclusion of farmworkers from these basic rights and simply grant them equal treatment under our labor laws.

You will have the opportunity to add your signature and your voice to this effort during Public Policy Weekend, February 9-10.

ONGOING ISSUES

The Public Policy Committee continues to follow and support other important justice issues including the Education Tax Credit, war and non-violence, federal immigration reform, child care subsidies for low-income working families, and access to mental health care.