



204 SW 8TH AVE • TOPEKA, KANSAS 66603 • PHONE 785-227-9247 • FAX 785-861-7438 • WWW.KSCATHCONF.ORG

Date: 2/19/19

Subject: HB2282 Abolishing the death penalty and creating the crime of aggravated murder

Proponent Testimony from Chuck Weber, Executive Director, Kansas Catholic Conference

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

The Kansas Catholic Conference supports repeal of the death penalty. The Church has been supportive of efforts to move away from use of the death penalty in the United States and abroad. In recent years, popes and the bishops have come to believe that its use in the modern world is undesirable and unnecessary.

If we can bring criminals to justice and protect society from unjust aggressors, without resorting to their destruction, we should.

An important part of the rationale for capital punishment is the state's role in maintaining respect for what is right, and its role in showing disapproval for what is wrong.

We live in a country where the government, mainly through the court system, allows the intentional killing of over one million unborn human beings each year. In Kansas, according to data provided by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, nearly a dozen unborn children are dying by live dismemberment abortion each week.

If we are to maintain a consistent "culture of life" in Kansas, we must seek an end to all destruction of human life, including through live dismemberment abortion, through embryo-destructive research, through physician-assisted suicide, and through the death penalty.

We recognize that this is a highly emotional issue and we do not, in any way suggest that we do not recognize the fundamentally evil nature of the acts that place a person on death row.

MOST REVEREND JOHN B. BRUNGARDT, D.D.
DIOCESE OF DODGE CITY

MOST REVEREND JOSEPH F. NAUMANN, D.D.
Board Chairman
ARCHDIOCESE OF KANSAS CITY IN KANSAS

MOST REVEREND CARL A. KEMME, D.D.
DIOCESE OF WICHITA

MOST REVEREND GERALD L. VINCKE
DIOCESE OF SALINA

CHUCK WEBER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

These atrocious, despicable actions destroy the lives of both the victims and their surviving loved ones. Our compassion for the victim's families is infinite. Our intolerance for the actions of the evildoer is not at all diminished by our position that alternatives to the death penalty are preferable.

We again offer our deepest sympathies for those who have been harmed by the actions of those in question.

That being said, if society can be kept safe from an incarcerated criminal without resort to the death penalty—including life without parole—we should seek that option.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony.