

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Most Reverend Gregory M. Aymond, Archbishop of New Orleans, issues the following statement on behalf of the Louisiana Conference of Catholic Bishops addressing the recent passage of Health Care Reform:

“The Louisiana Conference of Catholic Bishops expresses its disappointment in the passage of health care reform as approved jointly by Congress and signed into law by President Obama. Our hope was that Congress would redesign the bill, ensuring that federal funding for abortion was eliminated, while strengthening the conscience clause so that medical care provided in Catholic hospitals would not be affected. This did not occur. We are also saddened that some members within our Catholic family, including the Catholic Health Association, took a position that, in our judgment, will neither promote the good of society nor help us live out the mandate of Christ. While such an entity may appear to represent Catholic belief, they are not the voice of Catholic teaching.

We convey our thanks and our heartfelt admiration for all those members of Congress who stood strongly on their principles. To do so was courageous and provided one with an example of standing solidly for the values espoused by Jesus and the church, in spite of personal criticism. We are especially grateful that all members of our Louisiana Congressional delegation voted against this bill.

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Many questions remain concerning the executive order that President Obama has promised to sign. It is important to note that an executive order can be changed with the stroke of a pen, and as many legal experts have asserted, the language of a law will take precedence over anything contained within an executive order in the case of a court challenge. If the case would ultimately be brought to the U.S. Supreme Court, it is uncertain how the justices would vote in defending innocent human life. This new law stands to encourage even more abortions in the future, and signals that we as Catholic bishops will have to take a very close look at Catholic health care.

Please join us in prayer that we may courageously stand for Gospel values and encourage a culture of life within the United States. God bless America. ”

The Most Rev. Gregory M. Aymond, Archbishop of New Orleans

The Most Rev. Sam G. Jacobs, Bishop of Houma-Thibodaux

The Most Rev. Michael Jarrell, Bishop of Lafayette

The Most Rev. Robert W. Muench, Bishop of Baton Rouge

The Most Rev. Ronald P. Herzog, Bishop of Alexandria

The Most Rev. Glen John Provost, Bishop of Lake Charles

The Most Rev. Michael G. Duca, Bishop of Shreveport

The Most Rev. Shelton J. Fabre, Auxiliary Bishop of New Orleans

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March 23, 2010