

MASSACHUSETTS CATHOLIC CONFERENCE  
WEST END PLACE

150 Staniford Street, Suite 5, Boston, MA 02114-2511

Phone (617) 367-6060

FAX (617) 367-2767

staff@macathconf.org

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

MOST REVEREND SEAN P. O'MALLEY, OFM Cap. Archbishop of Boston

MOST REVEREND TIMOTHY A. MCDONNELL  
Bishop of Springfield

MOST REVEREND GEORGE COLEMAN  
Bishop of Fall River

MOST REVEREND ROBERT J. MCMANUS  
Bishop of Worcester

\_\_\_\_\_ or Current Pastor/Admin.

Saint \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Ave.

\_\_\_\_\_, MA \_\_\_\_\_

August 2005

Dear Monsignor/Father:

We are writing on behalf of the Catholic Bishops in Massachusetts to ask for your assistance in support of new efforts to pass a state constitutional amendment on marriage. As you may know, the Catholic Bishops have backed a signature drive effort, joining a broad-based coalition of leaders and organizations seeking to reaffirm marriage as the union of one man and one woman. Relevant materials for the drive are enclosed. Your help is critical!

Many commentators feel this will be our last realistic chance to restore protection for the institution of marriage in Massachusetts. As indicated in the materials you are receiving, the bond between a man and a woman provides the fundamental basis for society and family. The people have a right to be heard. Our goal is to get 120,000 signatures, and the parishes will play a crucial role.

The enclosed materials, **to be provided to your parish petition drive contact**, include:

- An informational brochure on the new amendment and the signature drive;
- Suggestions for gathering signatures in the parish, and bulletin blurbs.

We appreciate the response of the many pastors who have already forwarded to our office, as requested by the Bishops, the names of parishioners who will coordinate parish efforts. **It is important to identify a contact person in each parish, and we are asking you to put him or her in touch with our office (617-367-6060) as soon as possible**, so that each can be provided with the necessary training and materials ahead of time. We will forward these names to Catholic Citizenship, which will provide training and support.

The window for gathering signatures opens on Wednesday, Sept. 21, and the earlier that the parishes conduct weekend signature drives the better. We would like to have as many parishes as possible gather signatures starting Sept. 24-25. Of course, not every parish may be able to act on that weekend. Since the signature gathering deadline is Nov. 23, any weekend in October and early November is available, and parishes may do multiple weekends as well. Success will depend on a strong grassroots campaign for signatures in every parish.

Copies of all petition drive materials, along with updates and other information, will be posted on our website, <http://www.macathconf.org>. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Thank you in advance for your prayers and cooperation.

Edward F. Saunders, Jr., Esq.  
Executive Director

Maria Parker, M.B.A.  
Assoc. Dir. for Public Policy

Daniel Avila, Esq.  
Assoc. Dir. Policy & Research