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My dear friends in Christ,

Respect for the dignity of the human person and concern for the common good are indispensable values for a just society. As Catholics, we have a special responsibility to promote public policies that uphold these essential truths.

Our nation was founded on the principle that the right to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness are inalienable rights. It is our solemn obligation to work together as a nation to secure those rights for all, especially for the weakest and most vulnerable among us. At this time, our nation faces particular threats to both the dignity of the human person and the common good by a series of measures being considered by Congress and the President. The most serious of these is the "Freedom of Choice Act" (FOCA), which, if proposed and passed, would establish abortion as a "fundamental right" in all fifty states.

Previous versions of FOCA have included radical provisions that would invalidate numerous existing state and federal laws including those dealing with parental consent before abortion, the conscience rights of medical personnel and hospitals, and the desire of citizens not to support abortion through their tax dollars. With a new President and a new Congress dealing with many challenging public policy issues, it is impossible to predict exactly when, or in what form, FOCA will be presented for a vote. Portions of it, especially funding matters like the Hyde Amendment, could come as early as March. The President, by Executive Order, has already revoked the Mexico City Policy. By this action, U.S. funding has been restored to foreign organizations that perform and promote abortions in developing nations.

In the Archdiocese of Boston, on the weekend of March 28/29, we will be participating in a national postcard campaign endorsed by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops to defeat FOCA and similar initiatives. I urge you to join this important public policy initiative in unity with millions of Catholics and other people of good will across the nation who remain committed to preserving the dignity of the human person.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Archbishop of Boston