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26 prominent Catholics back Sebelius pick

Thomas C. Fox | Mar. 1, 2009

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius

A group of 26 Catholic leaders, scholars and theologians Mar. 1 publicly expressed support for the nomination of Governor Sebelius as the next HHS secretary .

They issued a statement calling attention to Sebelius? successful efforts at reducing abortion in Kansas as well as the Catholic faith?s long standing support for universal health care.

Sebelius Feb. 28th accepted President Obama's request to become his Health and Human Services secretary.

?As faithful Catholics we proudly offer our support to Governor Kathleen Sebelius, who has been nominated to head the Department of Health and Human Services,? statement read.

Conservatives denounce Sebelius nomination [1]

?Governor Sebelius is a woman of deep faith with a proud family history of public service. We believe Governor Sebelius? record of building the common good, reforming immigration laws, improving schools, innovating health care solutions, and significantly reducing the abortion rate in Kansas, makes her an excellent candidate for HHS Secretary.?

?Governor Sebelius has demonstrated civility and a new kind of politics that both earned her the respect and collaboration of Republican allies and delivered results for the citizens of Kansas. In addition to offering our support, we also reject the tactics of those who would use Gov. Sebelius? faith to attack her. As Catholics, we find such partisan use of our religion regrettable and divisive.?

The statement was organized by Catholics United, a Washington-based non-profit that promotes the church?s social teachings and the mission of justice and peace.

?What are the facts?? the statement?s signers asked. ?Kathleen Sebelius has made clear that she agrees with church teaching that abortion is wrong and has lived and acted according to that belief. As governor she has worked to reduce the number of abortions by supporting expanded prenatal care and adoption incentives, expanding health services for Kansas families, and providing a variety of support services for families."

The statement went on to say that among other actions, Governor Sebelius:

- signed the Senator Stan Clark Pregnancy Maintenance Initiative Program, a bill which funded support services for pregnant women and alternatives to abortion
- signed Alexa?s Law, to deal with certain crimes against unborn children, which defines an unborn child as a fetus at any state of gestation from fertilization to birth. As a result, if a pregnant woman was murdered, the offender could be charged with the murder of the unborn child as well;
- signed a law doubling the adoption tax credit and oversaw an expansion of adoption support spending in Kansas from $17,566,288 in 2003 to a projected $23,279,623 in 2008; and
- oversaw a decline in teen pregnancies between 2002 and 2007.

?Indeed, because of Governor Sebelius' efforts, abortions in Kansas have declined by 10 percent during her time as governor.?

?Affordable and accessible health care is an essential safeguard of human life and a fundamental human right. With an estimated 47 million Americans lacking health care coverage, it is also an urgent national priority. Reform of the nation's health care system needs to be rooted in values that respect human dignity, protect human life, and meet the needs of the poor and uninsured, especially born and unborn children, pregnant women, immigrants, and other vulnerable populations.?

The statement was signed by:

Ambassador Elizabeth Frawley Bagley

Professor Lisa Sowle Cahill

Nicholas Cafardi

William D?Antonio

Professor Miguel H. Diaz

Michael Duffy

Julia Dowd

Professor Joseph Fahey

Professor Richard Gaillardetz

Fr. David Hollenbach

James P. Joseph

Christopher Korzen

Professor Douglas Kmiec

Steve Krueger

Delores Leckey

Eric LeCompte

Kari J. Lundgren

Professor Jerome Maryon

Fr. Thomas Massaro

Professor Vincent Miller

Professor David O?Brien

Fr. Thomas Reese

Maria Riley

Professor Stephen Schneck

Margaret O?Brien Steinfels

Dr. Patrick Whelan

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[1] http://ncronline.org/news/conservatives-denounce-sebelius-nomination