



Department of Social Development and World Peace

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May 10, 2007

The Committee on Education and Labor
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative:

I urge the House Committee on Education and Labor to consider and bring to the full House the Healthy Families Act of 2007, H.R. 1542. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops supports this vital legislation as an important affirmation of human dignity and family life. It is our deep conviction that workers should not have to risk their livelihood to care for a newborn baby, a newly adopted child, or one that is seriously ill; nor should one's paycheck be in jeopardy because a worker is seriously ill, or a parent or spouse needs care.

The Healthy Families Act requires employers to provide seven days of paid sick leave annually for full-time employees and a pro-rata amount of leave for part-time employees. Leave could be used to meet an employee's own medical needs or to allow an employee to care for the medical needs of a family member.

This legislation advances the type of workplace that values family. The bishops in their *Putting Children and Families First* statement noted that such legislation "would not only protect the jobs of parents whose employers might otherwise penalize them for taking time for family responsibilities, but would also send a message that the nation sees children as a real priority for all of society." Public policy should support families by providing people who must take time away from their jobs to handle serious family responsibilities the ability to do so without risk of reprisal. Parents should not have to worry about losing income for taking care of themselves, a sick child, or spouse.

The passage of The Healthy Families Act of 2007 would not only help family life but would send a message that children and families are high priorities within our society. It deserves your support.

Sincerely,

Most Reverend Nicholas DiMarzio, Ph.D., D.D.
Bishop of Brooklyn
Chairman, Domestic Policy Committee