



March 5, 2018

The Honorable Jay Inslee  
Governor of Washington  
PO Box 40002  
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Dear Governor Inslee,

The Catholic Church in Washington State is deeply troubled by the state Legislature's recent passage of Senate Bill 6219. As the Bishops for Washington's 1.3 million Catholics, we strongly urge you to veto the measure.

By mandating abortion coverage in state insurance plans, this legislation represents an assault on a foundational teaching of our faith: the inherent dignity of every human person from the moment of conception until natural death. This principle leads us to reject policies that promote abortion, and it is the same principle that compels us to care for the poor and vulnerable in our communities and to oppose the death penalty.

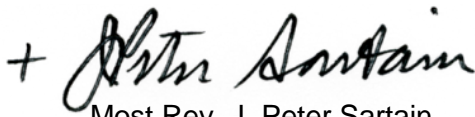
We recognize that many people in our state do not hold this principle. We strongly believe, however, that even those who do not share our unconditional commitment to the dignity of every person from the moment of conception, have every reason to support our right to exercise our conscience in accord with the teachings of our faith.

In multiple conversations with you this year, we made our position on this matter clear. We also expressed our opposition and raised our concerns with numerous legislators — including legislative leadership — and testified against the bill in both the House and Senate. While opposing the bill, we also sought at each point of contact with you and the Legislature to include language that would, at a minimum, protect our right to exercise our conscience. Unfortunately, the final legislation lacks any such protection and, as a result, we ask that you veto the measure in its entirety.

If enacted into law, Senate Bill 6219 would place religious employers and others at legal risk simply for following their religious or moral beliefs and exercising the fundamental right of conscience constitutionally guaranteed to all Americans. By forcibly coercing many of our state's citizens to act against their consciences, the measure would abrogate this most basic and cherished right which we must defend as bishops, as citizens and people of faith.

Gov. Inslee, we Catholic Bishops deeply appreciate all your efforts to protect the poor and vulnerable and your courage in placing a moratorium on the death penalty and supporting its abolition in Washington State. Consistent with these efforts, we strongly urge you to lift up the dignity of every person, and to protect religious liberty and conscience rights in the State of Washington by vetoing Senate Bill 6219.

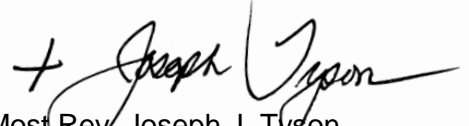
Sincerely,

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Most Rev. J. Peter Sartain  
Archbishop of Seattle

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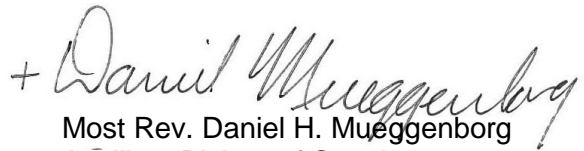
Most Rev. Thomas A. Daly  
Bishop of Spokane

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Most Rev. Joseph J. Tyson  
Bishop of Yakima

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Most Rev. Eusebio Elizondo, M.Sp.S.  
Auxiliary Bishop of Seattle

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Most Rev. Daniel H. Mueggenborg  
Auxiliary Bishop of Seattle