

# The Georgia Bulletin (2008)

The Newspaper of the [ Roman ] Catholic Archdiocese of Atlanta

Atlanta

## [ Roman ] Catholic Conference Hosts Feb. 5 Day At Capitol

By ANDREW NELSON, Staff Writer | Published January 17, 2008

[ Edited, excerpts, emphasis added, all text within brackets [ ] added ]

[ Roman ] Catholics from across the state are being encouraged to make their voices heard in the current legislative session, even as the bishops of Georgia and their representatives focus on key initiatives — opposing more frequent use of the death penalty ... [ continued ]

At the same time, **Georgia's two Catholic bishops are not supporting House Resolution 536** — called **the Paramount Right to Life [ Personhood ] Amendment** — which seeks to amend the state Constitution to establish the rights of “**personhood**” for embryos from the moment of conception. **Atlanta Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory and Bishop J. Kevin Boland of Savannah said in a Jan. 8 statement that they believe the proposed [ Personhood ] amendment “does not provide a realistic opportunity for ending or reducing abortion in Georgia.”** The state's Catholic spiritual leaders said they support an amendment to the federal Constitution that protects human life, an approach which has been endorsed by the U.S. bishops for many years. “We will not retreat from the fight to gain recognition of each child in the womb as a unique individual created by God,” said the bishops' written statement. **The effort on HR 536 here mirrors strategies in other states to combat abortion beyond the recent incremental steps to restrict the procedure.** In the West, **Colorado** activists are collecting signatures to place a personhood amendment on the state's ballot. Also, efforts are underway in **Michigan, Mississippi and Montana.** **The proposed amendment reads: “Paramount right to life. (a) The rights of every person shall be recognized, among which in the first place is the inviolable right of every innocent human being to life. **The right to life is the paramount and most fundamental right of a person.** (b) With respect to the fundamental and inalienable rights of all persons guaranteed in this Constitution, **the word ‘person’ applies to all human beings, irrespective of age, race, sex, health, function, or condition of dependency, including unborn children at every state of their biological development, including fertilization.**”** The proposed amendment would require two-thirds passage in both the House and the Senate to be on the ballot for Georgia voters to decide in the fall. The ultimate goal is to force the U.S. Supreme Court to revisit its 1973 Roe v. Wade decision that legalized abortion. Pat Chivers, the communications director of the [ Roman Catholic ] Archdiocese of Atlanta, said there is not a split between the [ Roman ] Catholic Church and the other pro-life organizations. In fact, **the Georgia bishops said** they have “admiration and respect for those who have crafted this legislation,” but **they cannot endorse the legislation.** Chivers said the [ **false Roman Catholic** ] church does not feel the amendment would help reduce the number of abortions and so it won't advocate for it. “We just can't agree with this approach,” she said. The church is raising its profile in the statehouse as more Catholics move into the Peach State. For the second year, the Catholic Communications Office and the Georgia Catholic Conference are sponsoring Catholic Day at the Capitol, encouraging members to attend a legislative briefing Feb. 5 and then visit their legislators. When the Georgia Catholic Conference, the public policy arm of the church in the state, and the Atlanta Archdiocese last year encouraged Catholics to show up for a day of lobbying lawmakers, more than 100 people took part. Frank Mulcahy, the part-time executive director of the conference, said ... **“Our biggest vigilance is in the area of immigration.** It would be protecting the human dignity of the people who are involved,” he said. Lobbyists for the church are guided by Catholic social teaching as they advocate for laws. They look to the “Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility” document, which the U.S. bishops approved last November. “Participation in political life is a moral obligation,” stated the document.

[ Continued...<https://georgiabulletin.org/news/2008/01/catholic-conference-hosts-feb-5-day-at-capitol/> ]