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**BISHOPS URGE LEGISLATURE TO MOVE TAX DISCUSSIONS TO SPECIAL SESSION**

With only a few days left in the 2004 meeting of the General Assembly, Kentucky's Catholic Bishops are asking the leadership of both houses to delay action on Governor Ernie Fletcher's tax modernization proposal. A letter from the Catholic Conference of Kentucky to the Senate President, Senator David Williams, and the Speaker of the House, Representative Jody Richards, states that "there is not enough time left in this session to give this matter the attention it needs to design a just and equitable tax structure that enables every Kentuckian to pay his or her fair share."

Rev. Patrick Delahanty, Deputy Director of the Catholic Conference of Kentucky, said, "Kentucky's current system is unjust in demanding so much from our poorest working citizens." He pointed out that the Bishops welcomed the Governor's proposal to exempt those earning less than \$12,000 from the tax rolls, but they are concerned that so many others who live on income below the federal poverty level are not included in this exemption.

"We look to scripture and our body of Catholic social teaching to give us guidance in judging whether this proposal is just and equitable," stated Delahanty. "As it is presented, this plan is regressive in nature and needs a good deal of amending before we can support it."

The Conference has concluded it is better to put off a decision on tax modernization until there is adequate time to write a law that encompasses a progressive system of taxation through which every Kentuckian can pay a fair share and a system that recognizes that Kentucky must meet the basic needs of every citizen: shelter, food, clothing, healthcare, and education, to name a few.