

June 1, 2006

***Statement of the Catholic Conference of Kentucky on Preserving the Estate Tax in KY***

Kentucky's estate tax should be preserved by decoupling it from the federal estate tax gradually being eliminated by Congress. Not to do so will reduce the amount of money Kentucky has available to provide for the care of her citizens, especially low-income persons eligible for Medicaid, students in secondary and post-secondary state schools, and uninsured persons dependent on our public health system.

Kentucky must spend its revenue to insure that the basic needs of all people – especially those who are poor and vulnerable - are addressed. This must be a priority before any other appropriations are made.

All citizens and corporations have the right and responsibility to contribute to the common good through the payment of taxes.

Kentucky should seek and maintain revenues sufficient to provide for the common good by meeting the basic needs of all, especially the poor and vulnerable.

It is clear that Kentucky already fails to meet the needs of Kentucky's poor and vulnerable, seen in the hollow eyes of the homeless, the broken bodies of those without health insurance, the tears of loved ones mourning for those who have died in our mines, and in the hearts of emotionally troubled children whose families rely on homes like Brooklawn. With all these unmet needs, Kentucky cannot afford the loss of revenue that will accompany any reduction of the Kentucky tax on estates.

The Judeo-Christian ethic found in both the Old and New Testaments is clear: citizens of faith have a moral responsibility to provide for others according to their talents and resources, so all those in the community have access to the basic needs that support human life for themselves and their families: shelter, food, clothing, education, health care and employment.

Taxation in any form should be based on one's ability to pay. In *Mater et Magistra*, Pope John XXIII taught that "In a system of taxation based on justice and equity it is fundamental that the burdens be proportioned to the capacity of the people contributing."

Kentucky tax policy must assure that the system collects taxes according to one's ability to pay. Catholic social teaching supports a progressive form of taxation. Our contribution to the common good should reflect our blessings. Those who enjoy the most wealth in our economic system benefit most from the structures and infrastructure that make economic investment and enterprise possible. From those to whom much has been given, much is expected.

The Catholic Conference of Kentucky respectfully urges Kentucky's legislators to pass legislation to separate Kentucky's estate tax from the federal estate tax and, thus, preserve funding for Kentucky's pressing social needs.

**Most Reverend  
Thomas C. Kelly, O.P.**  
Archbishop of Louisville

**Most Reverend  
John J. McRaith**  
Bishop of Owensboro

**Most Reverend  
Roger J. Foys**  
Bishop of Covington

**Most Reverend  
Ronald W. Gainer**  
Bishop of Lexington

**Edward C. Monahan**  
Executive Director

*The Catholic Conference of KY is an agency of the Catholic Bishops, established in 1968. It speaks for the Church in matters of public policy, serves as liaison to government and the legislature, and coordinates communications and activities between the church and secular agencies. The Bishops of the four dioceses of KY constitute its Board of Directors*