

FLORIDA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

201 WEST PARK AVENUE
TALLAHASSEE, FL 32301-7715

PHONE (850) 222-3803
FAX (850) 681-9548
www.flacathconf.org

D. MICHAEL McCARRON, PH.D.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



April 23, 2008

The Honorable Ken Pruitt
The Honorable Marco Rubio
The Capitol
404 S. Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100

Re: Strive for a Just Budget: Preserve Life, Promote Families, Protect the Most Vulnerable

Dear President Pruitt and Speaker Rubio:

In these difficult economic times, we urge you to utilize every approach available to you to protect our state's most vulnerable citizens. The genuine and legitimate needs of those who are defenseless and at risk should be the basis for the final decisions that come before you.

Reserve funds should be used to help those at greatest risk: the disabled, the elderly, the sick, the dying and the poor. Present economic conditions are among the important reasons that stabilization and "rainy day" funds exist. Now is the most appropriate time to continue providing services to those most in need over funding infrastructure that could be delayed, while preserving the safety net.

Economically disadvantaged and disabled children are especially at risk. We urge the greatest protection possible for programs of School Readiness, Foster Care (Community Based Care), youth aging out of the foster care system, crisis counseling services for pregnant women and children, and Healthy Start as well as medical and educational services for autistic and other developmentally disabled children.

Funding for DCF child abuse investigators is a special need. In times of economic distress, reports of child abuse increase and these protections are necessary. Without substance abuse treatment and counseling released inmates may relapse into destructive behaviors and the chances for re-incarceration are increased.

Provisions for health care in this year's budget are especially strained. We urge you to avoid disruption of critical Medicaid coverage, especially hospital, nursing home and hospice care services. Please do all possible to maximize matching funds and minimize cuts to the Medically Needy and the Medicaid Adult/Disabled programs.

As you lead the members of your respective chambers in making critically important decisions, we pray you will hear the moral demands of justice in caring for the needs of the most vulnerable in our state. We acknowledge the great challenge to harmonize the many legitimate concerns before you. May God bless you and guide you.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "D. Michael McCarron".

D. Michael McCarron
Executive Director

cc: Governor Crist