

Catholic Diocese of Jackson

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April 23, 2009
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Statement of Bishop Joseph Latino on Personhood Mississippi petitions

As Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Jackson, I must commend the many efforts of our Catholic faithful to promote a culture of life and to act on behalf of the unborn. As Catholic Christians we must remain steadfast in our commitment to defend human life in all its stages, from the moment of conception until natural death.

I am aware of a petition circulating in churches which seeks to place a “Personhood” amendment in our state constitution. The amendment defines personhood as beginning at the moment of fertilization.

For several years the United States Roman Catholic Bishops have been working to promote a human life amendment to the US Constitution due to the fact that *Roe* is a federal issue and not a state issue. We currently partner with the National Committee for a Human Life Amendment and prefer to work through these efforts rather than the well-intentioned efforts of the Personhood Mississippi initiative.

Therefore, while Personhood Mississippi is a noble initiative, as Bishop, I join with Catholic Bishops in several other states in not endorsing these Personhood petitions to be circulated in our Catholic parishes. We have committed ourselves to working for a federal amendment and feel the push for a state amendment could ultimately harm our efforts to overturn *Roe vs. Wade*.

For more information on the Catholic Church’s pro-life efforts and initiatives, visit www.usccb.org and click on Life Issues.