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Andrew D. Rivas, J.D.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Letter to House of Representatives on Jessica's Law

As the Executive Director of the Texas Catholic Conference (TCC) and on behalf of the fifteen Bishops of our state, I am writing to convey the grave concerns we have regarding House Bill 8, commonly referred to as *Jessica's Law*.

It is our understanding that the bill is scheduled for House consideration on second reading this Wednesday, February 28. While the TCC certainly supports the effort to protect our children from sexual predators we believe the bill goes too far in seeking to impose the death penalty for repeat offenders. As you know, the Bishops of Texas and the United States oppose the use of the death penalty in our country. Catholic teaching on capital punishment is quite clear: If non-lethal means are sufficient to defend human lives against an aggressor and to protect public order and the safety of persons, public authority should limit itself to such means, because they better correspond to the concrete conditions of the common good and are more in conformity with the dignity of the human person (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*).

Our Church fully believes that those who commit terrible violent crimes must be incarcerated, both as just punishment and in order to protect society. We stand in solidarity with victims and their loved ones. However, when it comes to matters of life and death, morality and common sense call for justice and careful safeguards. Therefore, we urge you to strike the provision in HB 8 that would impose the death penalty. Thank you for your careful consideration of this important matter and should you have any questions please contact me at your convenience.

Faithfully yours,

Andrew Rivas