

March 26, 2020

We are in limbo, now what?



Many lives are NOW on hold because of government or self-imposed lockdown due to COVID19.

Critical bills are NOW in limbo because the TN legislature took an UNPRECEDENTED recess—until June 1.

NOW what?

NOW is a good time to review critical legislation that will impact the common good of all Tennessee citizens—especially our most vulnerable sisters and brothers.

This legislation will stop the execution of the mentally ill.

[SB1124 / HB1455](#) | *Senator Briggs / Representative Ramsey*

As introduced, prohibits a court from sentencing a defendant convicted of first-degree murder to death if that person proves that, at the time of the offense, they had a history of severe mental illness.

This bill passed through the House Judiciary Committee and will head to the House Floor—a victory for TNCPPC. The bill must still pass through the Senate Judiciary Committee.

> **TNCPPC Supports**

Governor Lee is moving forward with ESA.

The Governor's recently approved budget will FULLY FUND the Education Savings Account (ESA) program beginning with the 2020-2021 school year. Several bills were introduced to overturn the ESA, but strong support in the House kept the bill alive. The ESA was approved only for Davidson and Shelby County schools.

TN Pregnant Workers FAIRNESS Act

[SB2520/HB2708](#) | *Senator Massey / Representative Hurt*

Among other things, this bill will make it unlawful for an employer to fail or refuse to make reasonable accommodations for medical needs arising from pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions, unless the employer demonstrates that the accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the operation of the business of the employer.

This bill is going to the Senate and House Floors for approval. We are so close to victory.

> **TNCPPC Supports**

Physicians performing partial-birth abortions

[SB2196/HB2263](#) | *Senator Johnson / Representative Lamberth*

This bill extends the time, from 30 to 60 days, within which a physician accused of performing a partial-birth abortion may delay the trial to allow the state medical board to determine whether the physician's conduct was necessary to save the life of the mother.

The bill was sent to the Senate and House floors for approval.

> **TNCPPC Supports**

Expanding Medicaid—Governor's hands are tied, for now.

[SB2526/HB2529](#) | *Senator Briggs Representative Travis*

As introduced, directs the governor to seek an appropriate amendment for the TennCare II waiver within 180 days of the effective date of this act to provide medical assistance coverage for the same population groups and services as the Insure Tennessee proposal while retaining any block grant financing arrangement and work and community engagement requirements; requires authorization by the general assembly before any amendment takes effect.

This bill was withdrawn. We will keep you informed as we learn more about the state's negotiations with the Center for Medicaid Services.

> **TNCPPC Supports**

A detectable heartbeat

[SB1780/HB1962](#) | *Senator Bowling / Representative Howell*

The Governor's heartbeat bill. This legislation prohibits a person from intentionally performing or inducing an abortion on a pregnant woman if the physician determines, in good faith and judgment, that the unborn fetus has a detectable heartbeat.

This bill is in limbo until the TN legislature reconvenes on June 1st.

> **TNCPPC Supports**

Not all resolutions are for the good.

[HJR0741](#) | *Representative Weaver*

Statement of Intent: affirms the constitutional duty and exclusive authority and power of the General Assembly to appropriate public money and balance the state budget.

The resolution is aimed at Governor Lee's statement that TN welcomes refugees. Those who voted for the bill don't want refugees to settle in TN.

This statement doesn't change the law; it's just making a statement—and not a good one.

The resolution passed the House and is heading to the Senate Judiciary Committee for a hearing.

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Tennessee Catholic Public Policy Commission gives witness to Gospel values in public affairs and government, engages and informs the Catholic Community on crucial social issues, and encourages and facilitates advocacy and participation in the Tennessee Legislative process. www.tncppc.org

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