



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: P: 573.635.7239 F: 573.635.7431
600 Clark Avenue, P.O. Box 1022, Jefferson City, MO, 65102-1022
mocatholic@mocatholic.org www.MOcatholic.org

Missouri General Assembly Hears Benevolent Tax Credit Bills

JANUARY 24, 2013 JEFFERSON CITY, MO – Members of the Missouri House of Representative’s Children, Families and Disabilities Committee listened to testimony on Tuesday concerning HB 87 dealing with benevolent tax credits. The legislation, proposed by Rep. Eric Burlison (R-Greene County), would restore some of these tax credits that expired on Aug. 28, 2012.

Missouri Catholic Conference General Counsel, Tyler McClay, testified in support of the credits, stating, “these credits provide an incentive for donations to organizations that benefit Missourians in need.” Tax credits that HB 87 would restore include those for donations made to food pantries and pregnancy resource centers. The bill also reauthorizes the Children in Crisis tax credit, and renames it the “Champion for Children tax credit,” after Norma Champion, a Missouri Senator who worked hard to support programs benefiting children during her legislative career.

Scott Baker, executive director of the Missouri Food Bank Association said his agency helped more than 950,000 Missourians last year. “Hunger is not a slight problem in this state,” he said. “Missouri has the fifth highest rate of child hunger in the nation. Hunger is a very real problem here.” His group helped to distribute more than 90 million pounds of food last year alone.

From the expiration of the tax credits in August through the end of 2012, Matthew Evans, deputy director of Missouri CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) said his organization in St. Louis at the Voices for Children program raised \$94,000, less than the \$103,000 raised in the same time period in 2011, when the tax credits were in place. Evans noted his organization could have provided volunteer help to as many as 93 children who are in the court systems due to abuse or neglect, had they had those funds.

Several witnesses testified in support of the pregnancy resource center tax credit, explaining the benefits they provide to women facing crisis pregnancies.

Pamela Sumners, executive director of NARAL Pro-Choice Missouri, testified for informational purposes, citing survey results and various studies that she said showed the “misguided” medical advice provided by pregnancy resource centers. Sumners, testimony drew more questions and controversy from legislators than any other testimony. Her testimony was rebutted by Sam Lee, lobbyist for Campaign Life Missouri.

During a Jobs, Economic Development and Local Government Senate Committee hearing on Wednesday, many

of the same agencies were represented in support of SB 15, and SB 20, similar benevolent tax credit bills.

Senator Eric Schmitt (R-St. Louis County), noted the two bills would be rolled into one.

At the hearing more than 14 people spoke in support of the bills. No one spoke in opposition.

At the end of the hearing Senator Jamilah Nasheed (D-St. Louis), thanked Senator Bob Dixon (R-Greene County), and Senator Ron Richard (R-Joplin), for sponsoring the Senate bills. "I thank you for sponsoring these bills," she said. "I commend you for doing this, since these bills help the indigent persons in my district. There is certainly a need for these credits and you have my full support."

The Missouri Senate is expected to vote on this bill Thursday.