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This fall, the MCC will once again host its Annual Assembly in a virtual format. We will release a collection of episodes of MCC from the Capitol all at once for you to enjoy at your leisure.

**MCC Welcomes New
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Good News

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Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization

In *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, the ruling that established a constitutional right to abortion in 1973. "The Constitution makes no reference to abortion, and no such right is implicitly protected by any constitutional provision, including the one on which the defenders of *Roe* and *Casey* now chiefly rely — the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment," Justice Samuel Alito wrote in the majority opinion. The ruling now returns the abortion issue to the individual states.

The law at issue in *Dobbs* was a 2018 Mississippi statute that banned nearly all abortions in the state after 15 weeks, in clear violation of *Roe* and *Casey*. In his lengthy majority opinion, Justice Alito explained that the Constitution makes no reference to abortion and that a guaranteed right to an abortion was not "deeply rooted in this Nation's history and tradition." As Alito explained, when the Fourteenth Amendment – the provision on which defenders of *Roe* and *Casey* relied – was adopted, abortion was banned in three-quarters of the states. By the end of the 1950's, all but four states and the District of Columbia prohibited abortion unless to save the life of the mother.

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In addition, the right to an abortion was fundamentally different to other unnamed rights the Court had held to fall within the Fourteenth Amendment, as abortion destroys an unborn human being. “Roe was egregiously wrong from the start,” continued Alito. “Its reasoning was exceptionally weak, and the decision has had damaging consequences... It is time to heed the Constitution and return the issue of abortion to the people’s elected representatives.”

Carson v. Makin

In *Carson v. Makin*, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down a Maine law that excluded religious schools from a tuition voucher program that subsidizes private secular schools. The 6-3 ruling follows the Court’s recent decision in *Espinoza v. Montana Department of Revenue* and states that the government may not discriminate against institutions on the basis of religion.

Maine currently subsidizes the cost of private schools for students who live in school districts that do not contain a public high school. Children who live in these districts are eligible to receive a tuition voucher to attend a nearby public or private school. However, religious schools that otherwise meet all applicable state requirements are specifically excluded from the program.

Chief Justice John Roberts reiterated the Court’s holding in *Espinoza*, stating that a state may not “withhold otherwise available public benefits from religious organizations” simply because they are religious. Such action is a violation of the First Amendment’s guarantee of the free exercise of religion. The ruling is seen as another blow to state “Blaine Amendments,” which prohibit direct government aid from going to religious schools.



Kennedy v. Bremerton School District

In *Kennedy v. Bremerton School District*, the Supreme Court ruled that a high school football coach’s post-game prayer was protected by the First Amendment’s free speech and free exercise clauses. Joseph Kennedy was a part-time football coach at Bremerton High School, a public high school in Washington state. During his time at Bremerton, Kennedy would pray at midfield after every game, with players from both teams joining him on occasion.

The school district expressed its concern with Kennedy, who temporarily ceased his post-game prayer. However, Kennedy soon resumed his on-field prayer and the school offered him an alternative – to pray after the crowd had left – that he declined. The school district then placed Kennedy on administrative leave and ultimately failed to renew his contract.

In a 6-3 ruling, the Court held that the school’s decision violated Kennedy’s free speech and free exercise clauses of the Constitution. Writing for the majority, Justice Neil Gorsuch said that the school’s actions “rested on a mistaken view that it had a duty to ferret out and suppress religious observances even as it allows comparable secular speech”. “The Constitution neither mandates nor tolerates that kind of discrimination,” Gorsuch concluded.





New MCC Executive Director/General Counsel

The Missouri Catholic Conference (MCC) welcomes Jamie Morris as its new Executive Director. Jamie joined the MCC in September 2018 as Legislative Counsel, lobbying primarily on issues related to the pro-life cause and marriage and family. Before joining the MCC he worked as an attorney with the Missouri Department of Insurance, where he helped draft and implement legislation and administrative rules. Jamie will also serve as the MCC's General Counsel, advising Missouri's bishops on legal matters pertaining to public policy and representing the MCC before government agencies.

Jamie's appointment comes after the departure of Deacon Tyler McClay who served the Missouri Catholic Conference for over twelve years.

"In many ways, political advocacy is a form of evangelization, an opportunity to share the beauty of the Church's moral and social teaching."

- Jamie Morris

Join our team! MCC Seeks a Legislative Analyst/Lobbyist

Government Affairs Position Available: The Missouri Catholic Conference, the public policy agency for the Catholic Church in Missouri, is looking for a legislative analyst/lobbyist to help advance the public policy priorities of the Catholic Church in Jefferson City. Bachelor's degree or higher and excellent written and verbal communication skills are required. Prior skills in government relations is preferred, but not required. Must be a Catholic in good standing, residing in or near Jefferson City or willing to relocate. Salary commensurate with experience. Submit cover letter and resume to: Missouri Catholic Conference, P.O. Box 1022, Jefferson City, MO 65102, or, via email, to mocatholic@mocatholic.org

New MCC Communications Director

The Missouri Catholic Conference is delighted to introduce our newest staff member, Heather Buechter. Heather joins the team as the Communications Director. Before joining the MCC, Heather was a news anchor at KOLR-TV in Springfield, Missouri. While in broadcast journalism over the past 12 years, she wrote scripts, shot video, edited, produced, and presented newscasts. Heather received her BA in Communication from the University of Arkansas - Fayetteville. She grew up in the small, rural town of Alma, Ark. She currently lives in Jefferson City with her husband Curt and their three children, Benjamin, Joseph, and Alexis.





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MCC Annual Assembly Goes Virtual Again in 2022

This fall, the MCC will once again host its Annual Assembly in a virtual format. As we did the previous two years, we will release a collection of episodes of MCC from the Capitol all at once for you to enjoy at your leisure. We look forward to exploring a variety of topics important to Missouri Catholics and presenting them in an engaging, informative fashion. We are excited to welcome St. Louis Archbishop Mitchell T. Rozanski, who will give opening remarks, and to introduce new voices along with familiar ones as guests. The episodes will be released at the end of September; be sure to subscribe via your favorite podcast listening app to be notified automatically upon their release.

New Episode of MCC from the Capitol: The Pro-Life Movement Post-Roe

Carter Snead, law professor and director of the de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture at the University of Notre Dame, and Jamie Morris, executive director for the MCC, discuss the significance of the Court's decision in *Dobbs* and what is next for the pro-life movement in this episode of MCC from the Capitol podcast.



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