

**A Message From the Catholic Bishops of Montana Regarding
Abortion Ballot Issue Constitutional Initiative (CI-128)**

Dear People of God,

On May 3rd of this year, we issued a pastoral call to reject Constitutional Initiative 128 (CI-128) and prevent it from appearing on the November ballot in Montana. Sadly, after large amounts of out-of-state funding, Planned Parenthood and its associates have succeeded. This grave threat to unborn children, mothers, and families will be on the ballot. As followers of Jesus and faith-filled citizens of Montana, we are compelled to speak boldly in defense of the infinite dignity of every human life.

We implore voters to scrutinize the full text of CI-128. Through the careful use of undefined terms, it nullifies Montana's current abortion regulations and safeguards while creating some of the most radical constitutional provisions for abortion in our Nation.

The ballot language, or voter's summary of CI-128, is grossly insufficient and misleading. Furthermore, the full text of the initiative, which voters will not see at the ballot box, clearly raises grave moral and ethical concerns. The full text of CI-128 will place expectant mothers at risk and enshrine extreme abortion procedures in our Montana Constitution.

In section one, the full text of CI-128 establishes abortion as a right that may not be "burdened" by the government if in any way this would interfere with a mother's "autonomous decision-making." It clearly follows that any regulation of abortion can be characterized as a burden that conflicts with autonomous decision-making.

Any of the following could easily present such a "burden":

- Limitations on late-term abortion of babies who feel pain
- Any restrictions on partial birth abortion
- Any parental notification requirements of abortion procedures on minors


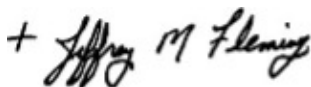
Montana's Supreme Court has recently struck down a law requiring parental consent. CI-128 goes even further by eliminating Montana's current requirement that parents be notified of an abortion procedure on their minor child. This initiative isolates pregnant girls when they need their parents most.

CI-128 would create significant risk in Montana for underage pregnant mothers by:


- Imposing a culture of secrecy that would undermine families
- Exposing underage mothers to exploitation and coercion
- Providing cover for those who would victimize underage women by committing abuse, human trafficking, and other crimes

We believe that Montana's children have a fundamental right to life and to grow up safely in our State. We ask all Catholics to continue to pray, abstain from meat on Wednesdays, and share the disturbing truth about CI-128 with the people that God has placed in our lives. Again, we implore all people of good will to read the full text of CI-128 in your voter guide, search and form your conscience, stand with our children against CI-128, and vote **NO** on your ballot.

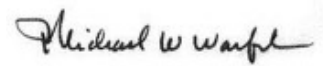
In Christ,



Most Rev. Jeffrey M. Fleming
Bishop of Great Falls-Billings
President



Most Rev. Austin A. Vetter
Bishop of Helena
Vice President



Most Rev. Michael W. Warfel
Bishop Emeritus of Great Falls-Billings