SEEKING JUSTICE IN PUBLIC POLICY

KANSAS CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Most Reverend
Shawn McKnight,S.T.D.
Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas
Board Chairman

Most Reverend
John B. Brungardt, D.D.
Diocese of Dodge City

Most Reverend
Carl A. Kemme, D.D.
Diocese of Wichita

Most Reverend
Gerald L. Vincke, S.T.L.
Diocese of Salina

Mr. Chuck Weber
Executive Director

Chuck@KansasCatholic.org
www.KansasCatholic.org
Phone: 785-227-9247
Cell: 316-708-5350

KANSAS STATEHOUSE OFFICE
Kansas Catholic Conference
204 SW 8th Ave.
Topeka, KS 66603

March 9, 2026

To: Chairman Mike Thompson and members of the Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee

From: Chuck Weber, Kansas Catholic Conference

RE: **WRITTEN PROPONENT FOR SB 520** **Creating the crime of interference with the conduct of a religious assembly, providing criminal penalties therefore and providing for a civil cause of action for damages**

The Kansas Catholic Conference is the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Kansas. We welcome the opportunity to offer our support for SB 520.

Various voices of leadership from the Catholic Church in Kansas and across the United States have expressed concern over some of the immigration enforcement methods carried out in certain parts of the country, including Minnesota. We support peaceful, lawful civil disobedience. Disrupting a church service crosses this line.

If passed into law, SB 520 creates the crime of "interference with the conduct of a religious assembly," including criminal penalties and a pathway to civil damages. The Kansas Catholic Conference sees this as a Religious Liberty issue, and we support this legislation. It will give Kansas prosecutors the tools they need to address such issues without hoping for federal intervention.

Current Kansas law regarding criminal desecration (KSA 21-6205) addresses damaging, defacing or destroying a place of worship. SB 520 will address that issue, in addition to the issue of disrupting or interfering with a religious assembly. Greater clarity and higher penalty levels are needed to match the severity of the crime. The civil penalties and cause for action by victims will increase the deterrent effect.

Regarding unwanted and unwelcome entry into Catholic Churches, we also reaffirm our opposition for law enforcement officers to enter places of worship without prior permission—including Catholic Churches—as well as Catholic schools, social service agencies and the like for purposes of making arrests or detentions.

This too, is also an issue of Religious Liberty we will defend.

Thank you.

Chuck Weber
Kansas Catholic Conference