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**LB173 Unjustly Discriminates against Reasonable Beliefs  
about Men, Women, and Marriage**

Feb. 22, 2017 (Lincoln, Neb.) – The Nebraska Catholic Conference opposes unjust discrimination in all of its forms and must therefore oppose LB 173, which would unjustly discriminate against individuals and organizations who recognize that men and women are biologically distinct, and who reasonably believe that marriage is between one man and one woman.

LB 173 would authorize cities and villages to incorporate “sexual orientation” and “gender identity” into local nondiscrimination laws with respect to employment, housing, and places of public accommodation. Further, it would add the terms “sexual orientation” and “gender identity” to current state employment law—including with respect to the “terms, conditions, or privileges of employment.”

“As Catholics, we must always remain cognizant of the fact that all men and women are created in the image and likeness of God, full of dignity – including those with same-sex attraction or who identify as the opposite sex,” said Tom Venzor, Executive Director of the Nebraska Catholic Conference.

“Unfortunately, LB 173 goes too far by forbidding individuals, organizations, and businesses from recognizing the basic distinctions between men and women, and by coercing them to promote beliefs about marriage that violate their deeply-held convictions, based on both reason and faith.”

In effect, the law would forbid employers and places of public accommodation from recognizing the basic fact that men and women, boys and girls, are biologically distinct, and from limiting access to multi-user intimate facilities based on biological sex rather than “gender identity.”

Further, LB 173 would allow government to coerce individuals and organizations—who willingly serve everyone—to participate in events such as same-sex marriages that violate their deeply-held convictions that marriage is between one man and one woman. Similar laws across the country have had an adverse effect on business owners, non-profit organizations, hospitals, religious entities, among others.

“It’s common sense,” Venzor said. “We should not authorize government to coerce and punish a person’s reasonable belief that we are created male and female and that marriage is between one man and one woman.”

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The Nebraska Catholic Conference (NCC) is the statewide association operated jointly by the Archdiocese of Omaha, Diocese of Grand Island, and Diocese of Lincoln. Located in Lincoln, the NCC represents the public policy interests of Nebraska’s three Roman Catholic bishops before the Nebraska legislature, the Nebraska delegation in Congress, and state agencies. The public policy issues addressed by the NCC include institutional concerns of the Catholic Church as well as issues related to Catholic moral and social teaching, human dignity, and the common good.

**ARCHDIOCESE OF OMAHA \* DIOCESE OF LINCOLN \* DIOCESE OF GRAND ISLAND**

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