

**ARIZONA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE BISHOPS’
STATEMENT ON GOVERNOR’S VETO OF “CONSCIENCE” BILL
April 13, 2005**

We are deeply saddened with Governor Janet Napolitano’s recent veto of HB 2541 pertaining to “health care rights of conscience.”

This legislation would have provided important civil rights protection for health care providers that have religious or moral objections to abortion and morning after pills (i.e. “emergency contraception”). For these providers, including Catholic hospitals, “rights of conscience” are particularly important when they involve the taking of an innocent human life.

Health professionals such as doctors, nurses, and pharmacists are highly trained professionals who use substantial independent judgment in their daily work. It is in society’s best interest that these professionals and the institutions they work for not be required to provide for every procedure a patient demands, especially when it involves abortion or abortifacients.

With the veto of HB 2541, health care providers’ inalienable civil rights are apparently deemed inconsequential. Consequently, we are extremely disappointed that Governor Napolitano has rejected this important legislation.

Most Rev. Gerald F. Kicanas
Bishop of Tucson

Most Rev. Thomas J. Olmsted
Bishop of Phoenix

Most Rev. Donald E. Pelotte
Bishop of Gallup