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Statement of the Massachusetts Catholic Conference on the passage of Transgender Legislation

Today's passage of *An Act relative to transgender anti-discrimination*, commonly known as the "Transgender Bill" follows several months of debate and discussion in the Massachusetts legislature and numerous expressions of public opinion.

While the purpose and intent of the legislation is to provide protection and access to public accommodations for transgender individuals in the Commonwealth, the issue of its implementation will require both careful oversight and respect for all individuals using such public accommodations.

Debate about this legislation and its implementation will undoubtedly continue in some form. It will inevitably touch on themes not easily captured by law. Pope Francis, for example, in his recent encyclical, "Amoris Laetitia", acknowledges the pluralism within and among cultures regarding sexuality and marriage, but he also warns against an absolute separation of the physical and cultural understanding of sexuality and gender. We too recognize wide disparities about sexuality in American society. The understanding of and respect for transgender persons has only recently commanded widespread attention. The complex challenge of crafting legislative protections for some in our community while meeting the needs of the wider population will require sensitive application of the legislation just passed.

We urge respect in this discussion for all those whose rights require protection. In our parishes, schools and other institutions, the Church will respect the civil law while upholding the principles of our faith and our religious freedom.

The Massachusetts Catholic Conference is the public policy voice of the Archdiocese of Boston and the Dioceses of Worcester, Springfield and Fall River.