

**UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS
CATHOLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES
NATIONAL CATHOLIC PARTNERSHIP ON DISABILITY
CATHOLIC CHARITIES USA**

June 5, 2007

The Honorable Tom Harkin
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Arlen Specter
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Danny Davis
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Shimkus
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Harkin, Senator Specter, Representative Davis and Representative Shimkus:

On behalf of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Catholic Health Association of the United States, the National Catholic Partnership on Disability, and Catholic Charities USA, we are writing to thank you and express our support for your legislation, the Community Choice Act of 2007, S. 799/H.R. 1621.

Our faith calls us to work for the full inclusion of all persons with disabilities in society and in the Church. This is rooted in the earthly ministry of Jesus, whose deep concern for the sick and for the men and women with disabilities he encountered is clear in the New Testament. Throughout history, the Church has followed Jesus' example through its diverse healing ministry, seen today in the Catholic health care facilities, community health clinics and Catholic charities agencies that serve millions and millions of people in our country.

In recent decades, our Church has come to a greater understanding of the needs of our brothers and sisters with disabilities. In 1978, the bishops issued their Pastoral Statement on People with Disabilities. In that statement, the bishops called upon all people of good will to work with people with disabilities to improve their living conditions and ensure that each individual is able to achieve the fullest measure of personal development of which he or she is capable.

It is in that spirit that we are pleased to support the Community Choice Act. With the services that the bill would make available, more people with disabilities will be able to move from institutional care to lives of independence in their communities. The legislation will give them the choices and control over their lives they

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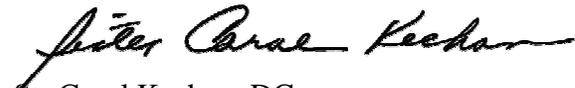
deserve. It will also increase the ability of people with disabilities to fulfill the duty we all share, to contribute to the common good through work, service and participation in the community.

Thank you for your leadership in introducing the Community Choice Act. We look forward to working with you to pass this important legislation.

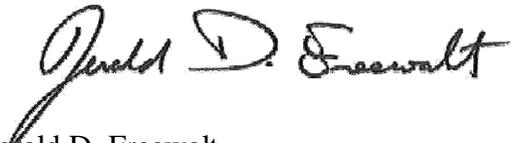
Sincerely,



Most Reverend Nicholas DiMarzio, Ph.D., D.D
Bishop of Brooklyn
Chairman, Domestic Policy Committee
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops



Sr. Carol Keehan, DC
President and CEO
Catholic Health Association of the United States



Jerald D. Freewalt
Chair, Board of Directors
National Catholic Partnership on Disabilities



Fr. Larry Snyder
President
Catholic Charities USA