



**Proponent Testimony H.B. 118
House Ways and Means Committee
Catholic Conference of Ohio
May 23rd, 2023**

Chair Roemer, Vice Chair Merrin, Ranking Member Troy, and members of the House Ways and Means Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony today. My name is Will Kuehnle, and I am an associate director with the Catholic Conference of Ohio. The Catholic Conference is the official voice of the Catholic Church in Ohio on matters of public policy, and we are pleased to support House Bill 118, which would exempt baby products from sales tax.

The Catholic Church calls for a social order where the vulnerable are protected, human dignity is recognized, and the common good is preserved. Of these, this bill attends closely to the third; we see HB 118 as a clear opportunity to promote the common good by easing the financial burden of families with young children. As Pope St. John Paul II wrote in his “Letter to Families”, the common good is most realized “in the newborn child.” By empowering young families to support their newborn children, HB 118’s creation of a sales tax exemption for certain baby products will assist all families to cherish and support their infants. Importantly, this bill would especially help low-income families with newborn children, as these families pay a larger share of their income in the form of sales tax.

The Catholic Conference thanks Representative Miller and Representative Santucci for introducing this legislation. We urge you to pass HB 118 and encourage the General Assembly to continue considering pro-family policies and programs that recognize the needs of young children and families so that all Ohioans can flourish at every stage of development.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony. I am happy to answer your questions.