



Proponent Testimony Bill 199
House Ways and Means Committee
Catholic Conference of Ohio
June 20th, 2023

Chair Roemer, Vice Chair Lorenz, 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 199, which would assure that married couples enjoy a fitting status in the computation of personal income taxes.

The Catholic Conference is grateful for Representative Young and Representative Dean's introduction of this legislation. It is not often that legislation so directly addresses an issue of the utmost importance to the Catholic faith: the privilege of marriage in the social order. According to the Catholic Church, the married couple, as the nucleus of a new family, constitute a microcosmic society between themselves. This miniature society produces unique and indispensable goods, which it renders to the greater community. From the rearing of children, who become future neighbors and citizens, to the simple life of charity and hospitality, the fruits of marriage are not just materially beneficial but socially necessary. For this reason, the Catholic Conference supports policies that favor the family and encourage married life, such as HB 199.

As the married couple brings to their communities the essential gifts I noted, our political institutions are obliged to encourage and privilege the nuptial society. HB 199 represents a commonsense reform of Ohio's tax code that would assure that married couples are no longer punished by the state for entering married life. A non-refundable tax credit for married couples filing jointly that assures that their shared personal income tax is not greater than their individual burden would respect our collective obligation to sustain marriage and families.

We urge your support for HB 199 so that we can relieve the most fundamental society in our state, married couples, from an undue tax burden. The Catholic bishops of Ohio hope that the General Assembly will continue to bring forward legislation that privileges marriage and families with tax credits, and, in so doing, recognizes the state's obligation to our mothers and fathers. Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony. I'm happy to answer your questions.