



# North Dakota Catholic Conference

## Press Release

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### **Catholic Conference Opposes Measure 1**

Bismarck, North Dakota - The North Dakota Catholic Conference announced today its opposition to Measure 1, calling it a threat to churches, charitable organizations, and social service agencies.

In a statement describing its position, Christopher Dodson, executive director and general counsel for the conference, said, "Though well-intentioned, Measure 1 would force churches and charities to turn over the privacy of every contributor as the 'price' to pay for civil engagement."

Churches and charities do not support or oppose political candidates. Nor do they make contributions to public officials. They do, however, speak out on public issues and partner with state agencies to serve the public.

"The Catholic Church believes that ethics and integrity should be the hallmark of the political process," said Dodson. "Measure 1, however, is not about whether someone supports more integrity and ethics in government. It is about the actual language of the measure." Dodson added.

Dodson listed several "sweeping consequences" of Measure 1.

Measure 1, he said, requires churches and charities to disclose the name of every contributor, even if only a small fraction of the organization's budget was used to "influence government action" or to speak out on a ballot measure. "Anonymous donations would no longer be allowed," Dodson said.

"Social service agencies," said Dodson, "would have to disclose the name of every contributor as the 'admission fee' for partnering with state agencies to provide important social services like health care, foster care, guardianship, and sheltering victims of domestic violence."

The North Dakota Catholic Conference is also concerned that the measure creates several tools that people could use to harass churches, charities, and their members. One of these tools is a new right to sue that bypasses state law.

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*The North Dakota Catholic Conference represents the Dioceses of Bismarck and Fargo on public policy matters.*