

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

September 13, 2006

The Honorable Arlen Specter
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Harkin
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Shimkus
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 200515

The Honorable Danny Davis
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 200515

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

On behalf of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Catholic Health Association of the United States, and the National Catholic Partnership on Disability, we are writing to thank you and express our support for your legislation, the Medicaid Community-Based Attendant Services and Supports Act of 2005 (MiCASSA), S. 401/H.R. 910.

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 MiCASSA. With the services that MiCASSA 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

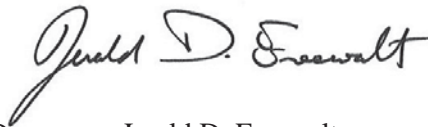
the choices and control over their lives they deserve. It will also increase the ability of people with disabilities to fulfill the duty we all share, to contribute to the common good through work, service and participation in the community.

Thank you for your leadership in introducing MiCASSA. 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



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



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