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Catholic Democrats Applauds Nomination of Gov Kathleen Sebelius to be Secretary of Health & Human Services

Boston, MA - *Catholic Democrats* is applauding President Obama for nominating Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius to become Secretary of Health and Human Services. Sebelius, a lifelong Catholic, will be heading up the agency that is primarily responsible for protecting the health of all Americans and providing essential human services, especially for those who are least able to help themselves.

Governor Sebelius's legislative record helped provide health insurance for uninsured children and children of low-income families with the passage of Kansas's CHIP program in 1998 as a state legislator and the Healthy KIDS program as governor. Additionally she signed a bill in 2005 doubling the tax credit for small businesses providing health coverage and worked to make prescription drugs more affordable by leading Kansas to join the I-Save-Rx prescription drug importation program.

"Governor Sebelius's legislative record, experience as a governor, and Catholic sensibilities, particularly regarding preferential treatment for the poor, will be of tremendous value in addressing health care reform, the projected Medicare insolvency crisis as soon as 2016, and aiding the millions of people who are being pushed into poverty as a result of the economic crisis," said Steve Krueger, national director of *Catholic Democrats*.

Catholics may have a unique contribution to make as the tremendous health care reform movement gathers steam. Both the Vatican and the US Conference of Catholic Bishops have supported health care as a fundamental human right for all. In their voting guide for the 2008 elections, [Faithful Citizenship](#), the US Catholic bishops stated:

"Affordable and accessible health care is an essential safeguard of human life and a fundamental human right. With an estimated 47 million Americans lacking health care coverage, it is also an urgent national priority. Reform of the nation's health care system needs to be rooted in values that respect human dignity, protect human life, and meet the needs of the poor and uninsured, especially born and unborn children, pregnant women, immigrants, and other vulnerable populations."

Recent polls have indicated strong support for universal health care coverage. A September 2008 poll by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life indicated that 63% of those polled believe in "a government guarantee of universal health coverage, even if it means raising taxes." In that poll, Catholics ranked highest in support of this for those with a religious affiliation. A CNN poll in February 2009 indicated that 72% of Americans would favor "a program that would increase the federal government's influence over the country's health care system in an attempt to lower costs and provide health care coverage to more Americans."

About Governor Kathleen Sebelius's Record on Reducing Abortions in Kansas

Pledging independent leadership to move Kansas forward, Kathleen Sebelius became the 44th Governor of the State of Kansas in 2003. In 2005, *TIME Magazine* named her one of the nation's top five governors.

Governor Sebelius signed the Senator Stan Clark Pregnancy Maintenance Initiative Program, a bill which funded support services for pregnant women and alternatives to abortion. Additionally, she signed a law doubling the adoption tax credit and oversaw an expansion of adoption support spending in Kansas from \$17.5 million to a projected \$23.3 million.

Under Governor Sebelius, the state of Kansas saw a decline in teen pregnancies between 2002 and 2007. As a result of her policies to support pregnant women and reduce teen pregnancy, abortions in Kansas have declined by 10% during her years as governor.

"Governor Sebelius is an excellent choice to head this important agency, which will be front and center in the upcoming health care reform debate," said Dr. Patrick Whelan, president of *Catholic Democrats*. "She is a Democrat who has had an effective pro-life position. The abortion rates in Kansas have fallen by 10% under Governor Sebelius's leadership because of her support for programs - such as the Pregnancy Maintenance Initiative and by doubling the adoption tax credit - that help women in pregnancy. And she will bring that kind of sensibility to shaping health care policy in the country as a whole."

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About Catholic Democrats

Catholic Democrats is an association of state based groups representing a Catholic voice within the Democratic Party, and advancing a public understanding of the rich tradition of Catholic Social Teaching and its potential to help solve the broad range of problems confronting all Americans. For more information about Catholic Democrats please go to www.catholicdemocrats.org
