

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**February 7, 2018**

## **Diocese of Biloxi**

**The Catholic Bishops of Mississippi, Most Reverend Joseph R. Kopacz, Bishop of Jackson, and Most Reverend Louis F. Kihneman III, Bishop of Biloxi, have authorized the release of the following statement regarding last week’s U.S. Senate vote protecting unborn human life and the upcoming Mississippi Senate vote:**

Last week the United States Senate sought to pass the “Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act.” This proposed law, which cleared the House of Representatives in 2013, 2015, and 2017, would prohibit abortions at 20 weeks and beyond after fertilization. Once again, the Senate failed to pass this into law, this time by nine votes. We Catholic Bishops of Mississippi wish to reaffirm the sacredness of human life from conception until natural death. With Pope St. John Paul II, we recognize abortion as “a most serious wound inflicted on society and its culture by the very people who ought to be society’s promoters and defenders.” We regret that this golden opportunity to protect innocent human life has once again passed us by, and we express deep sadness. We remind our representatives, once again in the words of *Evangelium Vitae*, that “they have a duty to make courageous choices in support of life, especially through legislative measures.” We ask continued prayer for a culture of life to prevail in our society, and we urge those who voted against this legislation—especially those who are Catholic—to reconsider. Here in Mississippi, our House of Representatives is to be commended for voting to protect unborn human life after 15 weeks of gestation, and we hope and pray that the state Senate will, in turn, enact such protection.

+Joseph R. Kopacz  
Bishop of Jackson

+Louis F. Kihneman, III  
Bishop of Biloxi