

USCCB REJECTS COVID BILL

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) formally opposed the American Rescue Plan Act, more commonly known as the “Stimulus Bill” or the “Covid Relief Bill.”

USCCB president José Gomez wrote a letter on March 6 to all U.S. Senators urging them to vote against the bill; several USCCB committee chairmen co-signed the letter.

This came the day after the USCCB released a letter by Gomez (and the committee chairmen) stating they could not support the bill unless it prohibited funding for abortions. The sponsors of the bill refused to accede to the bishops’ request.

The bishops were unequivocal in their opposition to the bill. “This grievous result gives us heavy hearts because it leaves us with no choice but to urge you to oppose final passage of the American Rescue Plan Act.”

The big story here is the decision of the bishops to make good on their promise that abortion is their “preeminent issue.” For those Catholics who prioritize social justice issues, this is a stunning loss. After all, this was their dream bill, packed with money for all their favorite programs.

There are many elements of the bill that are very appealing to the bishops, and to Catholics in general. But to ask Catholics to support legislation that helps the needy while denying the unborn the right to life is offensive. The most basic human right is the right to life, not income assistance.