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Michigan Catholic Conference News Release

Whitmer Line-Item Vetoes Include Pregnant Women in Need, Health and Safety of Students Enrolled in Nonpublic Schools

(Lansing, Mich.) – Women who find themselves in a crisis pregnancy will no longer have access to state funds for maternal and child well-being support from local non-profit organizations after Governor Gretchen Whitmer today vetoed \$700,000 in funding for the Michigan Pregnancy and Parenting Support Services Program. In addition to eliminating funds to help women in crisis pregnancies, Governor Whitmer also vetoed from the state budget monies that help ensure health and safety protections for students enrolled in nonpublic schools. These cuts were among 147 line-item vetoes issued by Governor Whitmer today from departmental budgets previously passed by the legislature.

“The process that led to these vetoes has been disappointing,” said Tom Hickson, Michigan Catholic Conference Vice President for Public Policy. “It is the hope of this organization that in forthcoming negotiations the Governor and legislature can work together to restore this critical funding. Michigan citizens should never be used as pawns in a months-long state budget partisan battle; unfortunately, that’s exactly what we’re looking at today with these line-item vetoes.”

To date, the Michigan Pregnancy and Parenting Support Services Program has benefitted over 8,700 women in Michigan, who have accumulated nearly 34,000 visits to one of fifteen non-profit locations that partner with the state. The program provides assistance to women who are pregnant, all the way through her child’s first birthday. Clothing, pre-and post-natal vitamins, furniture, formula and diapers, as well as counseling services and parenting classes are all available at no cost to women looking for help in their pregnancy or with their young child.

“This year the Democratic governor of Pennsylvania allocated \$7.3 million in funding for the same program in that state; Governor Whitmer’s line-item veto of a meager \$700,000 will have a negative impact on low-income women in Michigan and should have been avoided,” said MCC Policy Advocacy Rebecca Mastee, J.D. “Women deserve better than this veto, and we look forward to working with lawmakers on both sides of the aisle to reinsert this funding into the state budget.”

For the past several years the legislature has also allocated funding to reimburse nonpublic schools for complying with health and safety mandates from the State of Michigan. Some \$5.5 million in past years’ funding has yet to be disbursed as public school lobbies have sued the state over the allocation. While the public school advocacy groups initially won in lower court, the Michigan Court of Appeals has recognized the constitutional nature of the spending. The appellate court’s ruling is now before the Michigan Supreme Court.

Michigan Catholic Conference is the official public policy voice of the Catholic Church in this state.

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