

FLORIDA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

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May 19, 2015

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The Honorable Rick Scott
Governor of Florida
The Capitol
400 S. Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Re: Please Sign SB 378 – Expanding Civil Citations for Juveniles

Dear Governor Scott:

I write to urge your approval of SB 378, expanding the use of civil citations for juveniles.

We hold that the dignity of the human person resides in both victim and offender. Accordingly, the Bishops of Florida have long supported alternatives to imprisonment such as these which hold offenders accountable while challenging them to change their lives.

Juveniles who encounter the law enforcement system are frequently facing roadblocks to a successful future. Civil citations for nonviolent offenses, at an officer's discretion, would allow these minors to receive necessary interventions such as diversion programs, family counseling, substance abuse treatment, and mental health treatment while sparing them a criminal record that could impede future success such as gaining employment.

Studies have shown that young people who receive civil citations are less likely to reoffend than those who receive jail sentences. These programs save taxpayers the cost of incarceration and build on young people's capacity to reform and transform their lives and future behavior.

Thank you for your continued leadership in Florida. Please be assured of our prayers for you and your service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael B. Sheedy". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Michael B. Sheedy
Executive Director

cc: Most Revered Thomas G. Wenski, Archbishop of Miami