



March 31, 2026

The Honorable Akilah Weber-Pierson, Chair
Senate Health Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 1200
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 1088 (Blakespear) Health care decisions: life-sustaining treatment.

Dear Chair Weber-Pierson and Members of the Senate Health Committee,

The California Catholic Conference **SUPPORTS SB 1088 (Blakespear)** as amended on 3/17/26. This bill would replace the term “Physician Orders” with just POLST, identify the potential decisionmakers allowed to sign a POLST for an incapacitated person, specify that nurse practitioners and physician assistants can sign a POLST, and accept POLST equivalents from other states.

POLST is a portable, voluntary medical form to be filled out and signed by seriously ill or frail patients (or their healthcare decisionmaker) and their doctor, NP, or PA, after a rich conversation of the kinds of care the person desires for life-sustaining treatment. POLST specifies medical orders about CPR, medical interventions, and medically assisted nutrition and hydration.

Through the Caring for the Whole Person Initiative, the Catholic Church in California provides advance care planning workshops, helping adults identify a healthcare agent, have conversations with their family about their care, and learn about options for palliative care and hospice care. We encourage people to embrace ordinary means of care (presumption for nutrition, hydration, ordinary medicine, warmth, emotional and spiritual care) while using prudential judgment with extraordinary means: balancing the great gift of their life while also preparing to meet the Lord in hope of the resurrection.

One caution we hear in the community is many people are required by their nursing facility to fill out a POLST before they can access services, a clear violation of state law but from which older adults have no recourse. Clarifying the law around POLST can help ensure more patients receive true informed consent when filling out the form with their provider. We encourage the use of POLST, as well as greater awareness that it is a voluntary form.

The Catholic community in California is 12 million strong, and we are the largest provider of private nonprofit social services for education, health care, and social services for the common good of our state. The Conference supports policy that uplifts the most vulnerable and helps families to thrive in the state.

For these reasons, as the public policy voice for the Catholic Church of California, we request an **“AYE” vote on SB 1088**. If you have any questions, please contact Molly C. Sheahan, Associate Director for Healthy Families, at (916) 313-4019 or by email at msheahan@cacatholic.org.

Sincerely yours,

Kathleen Domingo
Executive Director

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