



TO: Judiciary Committee
FROM: Tom Venzor, Executive Director
Nebraska Catholic Conference
DATE: January 21, 2026
RE: LB818 (Domestic Assault Penalty Harmonization) (Support)

The Nebraska Catholic Conference advocates for the public policy interests of the Catholic Church through engaging, educating, and empowering public officials, Catholic laity, and the general public. We offer our support for LB818 which would harmonize domestic assault penalties with general assault penalties.

In Nebraska, the Catholic Church operates a shelter and a home for those fleeing domestic violence. In 2024, Catholic Charities of Omaha—which for the last 55 years has provided the only dedicated domestic violence shelter in Douglas County—provided nearly 5,000 nights of secure and confidential shelter for those facing domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking. Since 2011, Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska has operated St. Gianna Women’s Home, which provides year-long housing for those fleeing domestic violence, human trafficking, and abortion coercion. Since that time, CSS has assisted over 270 women—counting children, nearly 700 people. In 2024, they provided nearly 20,000 nights of shelter. These shelters and homes not only provide a secure place to sleep, but both agencies provide holistic, wrap-around care, which includes basic supplies, case management, access to food market services, child advocacy programming, mental health therapists, pastoral counseling, and safe community.

The Church’s intimate experience with those facing domestic abuse is what drives our support for LB818. As the United States Bishops have stated, “In response to so much crime and treatment of those touched by crime, a strong and growing movement has emerged that advocates on behalf of those crime victims and seeks to make the justice system more responsive to their concerns. We believe that these efforts deserve support. We encourage and stand with victims and those who assist them. A fundamental measure of the criminal justice system is how it responds to those harmed by crime.”¹

The U.S. Bishops have also stated that “[t]he human person is not only sacred but also social. How we organize our society—in economics and politics, in law and

¹ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice* (2000), accessible at <https://www.usccb.org/resources/responsibility-rehabilitation-and-restoration-catholic-perspective-crime-and-criminal> (last accessed on January 20, 2026).

policy—directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community. Marriage and the family are the central social institutions that must be supported and strengthened, not undermined.”²

LB818 provides an important harmonization of criminal law to ensure that the crime of domestic assault is treated on equal footing with regular forms of assault. By making it harder to prove domestic assault and making the penalties less severe, our criminal law sends the message that victims and survivors of domestic abuse and violence are not as important or valued as victims of regular forms of assault. It should not be easier to prove assault committed by a complete stranger against another person than it is for proving the same act by a husband against his wife, and the latter example should not be punished less severely than the former. By harmonizing these provisions, our criminal law ensures that offenders of domestic abuse and violence receive an appropriate punishment under the law, and victims of domestic assault are treated at least equally with victims of regular forms of assault.

The Catholic Church continues to stand at the ready to assist those in need of charity and care, rooted in the unfailing love of Jesus Christ, and we continue to stand at the ready to advocate for public policy solutions that help build peace within the family so that the “joy of love spills out into the world and radiates to the whole of society.”³

We urge the Judiciary Committee to advance LB818 to General File. Thank you for your time and consideration.

² United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Call to Family, Community, and Participation*, accessible at <https://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/call-to-family-community-and-participation> (last accessed on January 20, 2026).

³ Pope Francis, 50th World Day of Peace, “Non-Violence: A Style of Politics for Peace,” 2017, paragraph 5, accessible at https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/peace/documents/papa-francesco_20161208_messaggio-l-giornata-mondiale-pace-2017.html (last accessed on January 20, 2026).