



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE + ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON + DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

**Statement to the  
Joint Committee on Administrative, Executive and Legislative Review  
RE: Emergency/Proposed Regulations on Domestic Partner Coverage  
COMAR 31.10.35.01-.04**

**Submitted by  
Mary Ellen Russell  
January 10, 2008**

The Maryland Catholic Conference represents the public policy interests of the Catholic bishops serving Maryland from the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the Archdiocese of Washington, and the Diocese of Wilmington. We submit this testimony today to urge the Joint Committee to reject the regulations proposed by the Maryland Insurance Administration to create a legal definition of the term “domestic partnership” for the purpose of carrying out Section 15-403.2 of the Insurance Article.

Our reasons for urging the Committee to take this action are simple: the responsibility for codifying a legal definition of domestic partnerships does not belong to this committee, to the Maryland Insurance Administration, or to the regulatory process. It properly belongs to the legislature, who last year rejected such a definition when considering the legislation that has prompted these proposed regulations.

While that legislation called upon the Insurance Administration to adopt regulations to implement the enacted statute, the regulations before your consideration go beyond the scope of that charge. The statute does not, and should not, specifically require that a legal definition of “domestic partnerships” be created in regulation. The regulations called for in the legislation simply ask the Insurance Administration to take a role in directing the implementation of the statute between insurance companies and employers.

If the legislature chose to be silent on the legal definition of domestic partnerships, surely the Insurance Administration should not assume that task. In honor of an open and democratic legislative process, we urge you to reject these regulations, and more importantly, this manner of making significant policy decisions in Maryland.