In a November 23 statement, Wisconsin’s bishops reflected on the November 13 terrorist attacks in Paris and urged Wisconsinites to support Syrian refugee resettlement. The bishops expressed their “deepest condolences to the French people for the horrific loss of life at the hands of ISIS terrorists. There is no justification for such barbarism, especially when done in the name of God. The unspeakable brutality in Paris last week has understandably raised concerns about public safety here in the United States. However, we reaffirm our support for the resettlement of refugees from Syria and all other places where persecution, terrorism, and war have inflicted terrible suffering and forced people to flee for their lives.”

The bishops pointed out that nationally the Catholic Church resettles about one-third of the refugees who enter the U.S. annually and that in Wisconsin the Department of Children and Families (DCF) authorizes Catholic Charities in Milwaukee to resettle refugees.

“Catholic Charities staffers speak over 20 different languages and, in concert with hundreds of Catholic parishioners, help refugees adapt to American life by providing initial shelter, food, clothing, employment, and English literacy instruction. According to the DCF, of the 70,000 refugees who presently reside in our state, 95 percent (66,500) are self-sufficient and most are U.S. citizens.”

The bishops reminded Catholics that “we are called to protect the life and dignity of every human being and to welcome the stranger. As Americans, we witness to the fact that a nation of exiles, of ‘huddled masses yearning to breathe free,’ can continue to offer hope and opportunity to the world. Americans have been immensely blessed. We must be generous in sharing these blessings with others.”

The statement concludes by urging everyone to “recommit ourselves to our most cherished principles. Otherwise terrorism will have succeeded not only in creating thousands of victims and exiles but also in causing us to abandon our highest ideals.”

The U.S. House of Representatives passed HR 4038, which would require that the Secretary of the

Please turn to page 2
Recently Pope Francis called on the world’s religions to join forces in the fight against fundamentalism and extremism, arguing instead for a focus on “positive values” such as the promotion of peace, care for the poor, and environmental protection.

Here in Wisconsin, the WCC has a tradition of working with advocates for other religious groups to urge policy makers to consider the needs of those in our state who live in poverty.

Over the years, the WCC has made common cause with the Wisconsin Council of Churches, the Wisconsin Jewish Conference, and the Lutheran Office for Public Policy. Often we lobby separately on behalf of the same issues. On nearly every occasion, these efforts have been on behalf of proposals to help those who live in need or to oppose measures that may make their lives more difficult.

We jointly signed a letter urging Governor Doyle to prioritize the needs of the poor in his budget and an op-ed piece urging Governor Walker to accept federal Medicaid money. We have also written jointly to lawmakers asking them to consider the impact of changes to the food stamp program or mandates to drug test recipients of public assistance. We have participated in press events opposing efforts to deregulate rent-to-own agreements because of their adverse impact on those of modest financial means. At other times, we co-signed opinion pieces on these issues.

These joint endeavors have not always been successful. But they have served as common witness to the shared truth we hold—that those in need have a special claim on our attention when making public policies that serve the common good. Win or lose, we have been true to our respective faiths when we have done so.

On a personal note, as announced in the story on Page 4, I am retiring after more than 28 years with the WCC. Consequently, this is my last Director’s Corner. It has been an honor to speak for our values in the public square. Thanks to all of you who have supported and appreciated those efforts.

Syrian Refugees, from page 1

Department of Homeland Security, with concurrence from the Federal Bureau of Investigation and National Director of Intelligence, certify that each refugee case of Syrians or Iraqis admitted to the United States is not a terrorist threat. Additionally, a number of U.S. Governors have recently announced a desire to prohibit Syrian refugees from resettling in their states. Readers are urged to contact state and federal lawmakers. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) offers the following talking points:

- Welcoming refugees is the American way and an important part of the Catholic Christian calling.
- The U.S. government handpicks the refugees who resettle here, and refugees are the most thoroughly vetted people to come to the United States.
- This is not an either/or situation. The U.S. can continue to welcome refugees while also continuing to ensure national security. We must do both.

The USCCB has additional resources at http://www.usccb.org/about/migration-policy/syrian-refugee-crisis.cfm. To learn more about the U.S. government’s refugee screening policies, go to http://www.uscis.gov/refugeescreening.

Please contact the following:

- Governor Scott Walker, (608) 266-1212, governor@wisconsin.gov

For Wisconsin legislators, type your address in the top right hand corner of the Legislature’s Home Page at http://legis.wisconsin.gov/.

For U.S. Representatives, type your zip code in the top right hand corner of the House directory at http://www.house.gov/representatives/.
Heal Without Harm Coalition Urges Ethical Research

The Wisconsin Catholic Conference, Wisconsin Right to Life, Pro-Life Wisconsin, and Wisconsin Family Action formed a new coalition this past October, Heal Without Harm, to educate the public and the Legislature on the ethical problems surrounding abortion-derived fetal body parts and their use in medical research. The coalition supports Assembly Bill 305/Senate Bill 260 and has created a Question & Answer resource that is available on the WCC website. The following is an abridged version.

Why prohibit the use of fetal tissue from induced abortions? The unborn fetus is a human being with a right to life. To directly terminate her life by means of an induced abortion is unjust. To view her as useful only for her body parts further degrades and dehumanizes her.

Second, the dependence of fetal tissue research on the abortion industry helps to legitimize abortion and to further embed it in our educational and medical institutions. Fetal tissue from abortions gives these institutions a vested interest in ensuring that abortions do not decline, let alone disappear.

Does this mean that all fetal tissue research in Wisconsin will be suddenly outlawed if the bills become law? No. Existing fetal tissue obtained prior to January 1, 2015, can still be used by Wisconsin researchers and the use of fetal tissue obtained from miscarriages and still births will continue to be legal.

But weren’t vaccines to prevent polio and other diseases derived from aborted fetuses? Yes, but the fact that important discoveries in the past were made in an unethical manner does not mean that we have to continue to do so today, especially when ethical alternatives exist. In the mid-twentieth century, U.S. researchers made scientific advances by experimenting on children with disabilities. Today those experiments are universally regarded as unethical.

Science could discover all kinds of things and with much greater speed if there were no ethical limits on human experimentation, but ethical limits exist to make certain that vulnerable members of the human family are not exploited.

If abortion is legal and if the aborted fetus will be discarded anyway, isn’t it better to use it to find life-saving cures for others? It is never right to commit evil, even if good can come out of it. You cannot take one life in order to save another. Human beings must never be treated as a means to an end, however noble. Even today, reputable scientists refuse to use the data collected by Nazi experimenters out of respect for their victims.

But researchers say that they follow strict ethical guidelines in obtaining fetal tissue, including ensuring that they have the consent of the women who are obtaining abortions. It is very difficult to ensure that current guidelines are truly being followed. First, because recent undercover videos reveal that 1) abortion techniques are sometimes altered to produce the most desirable fetal specimens; and 2) some women are allegedly being coerced into giving their consent or are not fully informed about what will be done with their children’s remains.

Second, an aborted unborn child did not consent to his or her destruction. Full respect for our aborted brothers and sisters demands that they receive a proper burial, not dissection and experimentation.

Both AB 305 and SB 260 have stalled in the Legislature so readers are strongly encouraged to share this resource with others and to contact their legislators. Go to http://legis.wisconsin.gov/ and type in home address under “Find My Legislators.” You can also call the Legislative Hotline in Madison, 608-266-9960, or toll-free, 1-800-362-9472.
For up-to-date information, join the WCC’s free e-advocacy network and get the bi-weekly *Capitol Update*. Visit [www.wisconsincatholic.org](http://www.wisconsincatholic.org) to sign up!

**CAPITOL REPORT** is published quarterly by the WCC to inform Catholics and policy decision makers of the WCC’s activities and positions on state and federal legislation.

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**John Huebscher to Retire, Kim Wadas Named New WCC Executive Director**

The Wisconsin Catholic Conference has announced that Executive Director John Huebscher will retire in January and Associate Director Kim Wadas will succeed him.

Huebscher is the WCC’s second director, having succeeded Charles Phillips in July of 1992. During his tenure he served as president of the National Association of State Catholic Conference Directors (NASCCD) from 1998 through 2000. He also represented the State Catholic Conference Directors as an observer member on the Domestic Policy Committee of the U.S. Catholic Conference (USCC) from 1992 through 1998, and in a similar capacity on the USCC’s Committee on Pro-Life Activities from 2000 to 2001. In May 2004, he was one of four state Catholic conference directors asked to present insights on the relationship between faith and politics to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Task Force appointed to address the topic.

Prior to becoming Executive Director, Huebscher was the WCC’s Associate Director from 1987 to 1992.

Wadas is a graduate of Marquette University and the University of Iowa College of Law. She has been with the WCC since 2007, serving as Associate Director for Education and Health Care. She lives in Madison and is a member of Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish, where she serves as a lector. Wadas also acts as Secretary for the Advisory Board of Directors of St. James Catholic School in Madison.

The announcements were made following a meeting of the Wisconsin Catholic Conference Board of Directors. WCC President Archbishop Jerome Listecki of Milwaukee said, “The bishops greatly appreciate John’s 28 years of service to the Catholic Church in the state of Wisconsin. He provided a thoughtful and insightful presence to the issues addressed by the WCC.”

“At the same time, we have come to appreciate the talents of Kim Wadas during her nearly nine years with the WCC. We are confident she will continue to provide the same thoughtful and informed representation that has marked the WCC’s advocacy in the past.”