

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **TWELVE HIGHLANDS SCHOOL SENIORS LOBBY FOR LIFE IN AUSTIN**

(Irving, Texas.-April 22, 2009) – On March 31<sup>st</sup>, over 400 Catholics from around the state gathered in Austin to participate in the Life and Family Life Advocacy Day at the State Capitol. Included among them, were twelve Highlands senior girls. As the only group of teenagers present on lobby day, they were certainly noticed. Student Mary Toates recalls, “As we walked throughout the State Capitol in our uniforms, people kept stopping to ask us where we were from and why we were there. Everyone was very impressed when they heard what we had to say.”

Their day began with mass at 8:00 at the Cathedral with other pro life lobbyists, followed by a walk to the Capitol, where they toured and attempted to see the senate and house sessions. After lunch, they broke into individual groups. During the legislative visit, teams of three to five people are formed with at least one person taking on the role of reporter. There are four legislative visits assigned per team. These teams are delegated to meet with his or her senator or representative, as well as additional representatives or senators from the diocese. The team presents information to the legislature/staff member on at least one specific bill on the TCC’s Legislative Session Priorities and discusses the legislature’s position on such bill(s). It is an opportunity to educate, inform and be a witness to the Catholic faith and her teachings. With regard to her personal experience there, Highlands student Charlotte Ward acknowledges, “I really enjoyed seeing my representative and finding out he is pro life.”

The girls were taught how to lobby and educated on the bills by Andrew Smith, director of communications for the Catholic Pro Life Committee. He informed them there was a “buzz” at the Capitol with regard to the pro life high school lobbyists there.

### **About TX Legislative Advocacy Days**

Every other year, The Texas Catholic Conference, an association of the fifteen ordinary Roman Catholic Bishops of Texas, hosts a Family and Life Advocacy Day where pro lifers from all over the state of Texas come to the Texas Capital in Austin to speak to the senators and representatives to promote and encourage them to vote for pro life bills that are up in the senate and the house at that time.

Legislative Advocacy Days are an opportunity for Catholics around the state to participate in the political process by voicing the concerns of the Texas Bishops. Participants are invited to visit the State Capitol and meet with legislative staff to discuss the Bishops' legislative concerns regarding issues that affect the life and dignity of the people of Texas.

**How can I learn more about the Bills promoted by the TCC and Catholic Teaching?**

The 81<sup>st</sup> Legislative Session Priorities are available on-line at [www.TXcatholic.org](http://www.TXcatholic.org). You may click on any of the bills listed as priorities for talking points and background information on Church Social Teaching.

**About The Highlands School**

Established in 1986, The Highlands School is a Catholic college-preparatory school. Offering grades Pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup>, the mission of The Highlands School is to provide the highest quality education and integral formation of the student as a well-rounded mature youth of character and integrity. Personalized attention from faculty, staff, and religious provides each student with the maximum opportunity for growth.

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For additional information about this topic, or to schedule an interview with Mr. John Borley, please call Chris Hannis, Director of Development, at 972-438-8218 ext. 261 or e-mail Chris at [channis@thehighlandsschool.org](mailto:channis@thehighlandsschool.org)