



THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE

Office of Communications • *The Long Island Catholic* • *Fe Fuerza Vida*

50 North Park Avenue, Rockville Centre, NY 11570

Tel: 516-678-5800, ext. 221 • Fax: 516-594-0984 • www.drvc.org

Guidance for Catholics for the Upcoming Election

(Excerpted from, *“Our Cherished Right, Our Solemn Duty”* by the Catholic Bishops of New York State -2010)

We Catholics are called to look at politics as we are called to look at everything – through the lens of our faith. While we are free to join any political party we choose, or none at all, we must be cautious when we vote not to be guided solely by party loyalty or by self-interest. Rather, in evaluating the important issues facing our state and nation, we should be guided by the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the teachings of His Church.

Our national and state elected officials have profound influence on countless matters of great importance, such as the right to life, issues of war and peace, the education of children and how we treat the poor and vulnerable. We must look at all of these issues as we form our consciences in preparation for Election Day.

Unfortunately, it is the rare candidate who will agree with the Church on every issue. But, as the U.S. Bishops’ most recent document *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* (www.faithfulcitizenship.org) makes clear, not every issue is of equal moral gravity. The inalienable right to life of every innocent human person outweighs other concerns where Catholics may exercise prudential judgment, such as how best to meet the needs of the poor or how to increase access to health care for all.

The right to life is the right through which all others flow. To the extent candidates reject this fundamental right by supporting an objective moral evil, such as legal abortion or euthanasia, Catholics should consider them less acceptable for public office. As *Faithful Citizenship* teaches, “Those who knowingly, willingly, and directly support public policies or legislation that undermine fundamental moral principles cooperate with evil.”

These are complex times, so our task is not easy. It is often difficult to get a good grasp on the positions of incumbent congressional representatives and state legislators, not to mention their challengers. Accurate news accounts of positions are hard to come by, and voting records on important issues are often lacking. So, a voter’s task of being well informed on all candidates and all issues can be truly challenging. Yet our state is facing many critical issues which are of vital concern to faithful Catholics. Thus, it is absolutely necessary for good citizens to take a careful look at every candidate and to vote accordingly for those candidates who will best represent their beliefs.

Many of the most compelling moral issues of the day play out at the state level. Restrictions on abortion, whether or not to employ the death penalty, issues related to gun and gang violence, sexual abuse, parental rights in education, programs to serve the poor, access to health insurance – all of these debates occur in the halls of our state capitol in Albany. You can find more information about these important issues at the New York State Catholic Conference website (www.nyscatholic.org).

We set forth below potential questions for candidates on a variety of critical issues, and we urge you to learn where all the candidates for every office stand on each issue. This list is by no means exhaustive, but our hope is that it serves as a valuable tool in forming your consciences as you make your decisions in the voting booth as faithful Catholics and good citizens.

We encourage you to properly form your consciences by reflecting on the moral and social teachings of our Church, and we strongly urge you to vote on Election Day. Remember, when you cast your vote you are exercising your cherished right and your solemn duty both as Americans and as Catholics.



Important Questions for Political Candidates

The Right to Life

- Do you agree with the need to overturn the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Roe v. Wade*, which struck down all state laws criminalizing abortion and established a woman's "right" to abort her unborn child in the womb?
- Do you oppose the "Reproductive Health Act," which would declare abortion to be a "fundamental right" in New York State and would go well beyond *Roe v. Wade* by: permitting late-term abortions; allowing non-physicians to perform abortions; prohibiting parental consent requirements and limits on government funding of abortion; jeopardizing any agency that does not refer for abortion; and seriously threatening conscience protections for hospitals and medical professionals?
- Do you support a ban on physician-assisted suicide?
- Do you oppose surrogate motherhood for profit?
- Do you oppose the death penalty?
- Do you oppose using taxpayer money to fund abortions?

Parental Rights in Education

- Do you support the right of all parents – especially poor parents – to be provided with the means (such as education tax credits) to choose the most appropriate school for their child, including a religious or independent school?
- Do you support restoring full state reimbursement on mandates in religious and independent schools?

Immigration Reform

- Do you support immigration reform that regularizes the situation for undocumented immigrants already in this country?
- Do you oppose punishing charitable organizations that provide social services to undocumented persons?

Access to Health Care

- Do you support legislative action to provide access to health care for needy New Yorkers?

Protecting the Poor

- Do you support the *Farmworkers Fair Labor Practices Act* that would grant farm workers certain rights available to all other New York workers, such as the right to overtime pay, collective bargaining and a day of rest?
- Do you support an increase in the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit, available as refunds to families with the greatest need?

Religious Liberty

- Do you support the right of faith-based health and human service providers to offer services to the community in accord with their religious beliefs?
- Do you support the right of faith-based health and human service providers to make employment and employee benefits decisions in accord with their religious beliefs?