

Your Faith and Your Vote

Faith

As people of faith and reason, Catholics are called to bring truth to political life. Faith helps us see more clearly the requirements of a good society, namely respect for the dignity of all human life and a commitment to the common good.

Conscience

A well-formed conscience equips us to address political questions. “Conscience is a judgment of reason whereby the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act. . . . [Every person] is obliged to follow faithfully what he [or she] knows to be just and right” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1778). We have a lifelong obligation to form our consciences in accord with human reason, enlightened by the teaching of Christ as it comes to us through the Church. Catholics should consult the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* to form their consciences according to Catholic teaching.

Issues

The questions listed here are to help guide Catholics in their efforts to make moral and prudential decisions about candidates and public policies. Please use this when contacting candidates for *local and state public office*. Some issues are more important than others. Some concern policies, like attacks on human life, that a Catholic can never support. Catholics can legitimately disagree about how to address some other issues. All the issues, however, deserve our attention. To obtain more information go to www.yourfaithyourvote.org or contact the North Dakota Catholic Conference (1-888-419-1237).

Choices

Find out the candidates’ positions on each of the issues. Look beyond party politics, analyze campaign rhetoric critically, consider the character and integrity of the candidate, and choose political leaders according to the principles of your faith. Turn to God in prayer asking for guidance. To find out who is running for office in your area and where to vote, contact the Secretary of State at www.nd.gov/sos/ (800-352-0867).

Vote

Catholics have an obligation to participate in the democratic process. Remember to vote and, no matter what the outcome, become involved in the legislative process. One way to get involved is by joining the Legislative Action Network at ndcatholic.org.

Where Does the *State* Candidate Stand on . . .

Creating a Sanctuary for Life

- Promoting and funding policies and programs that help pregnant women, mothers, and newborns?
- Maintaining bans on abortion, assisted suicide, euthanasia, the death penalty, human embryo research, and commercial surrogacy?

Religious Freedom

- Protecting the exercise of religion?
- Protecting the right of religious organizations to serve the public in accordance with their beliefs?

Family and Education

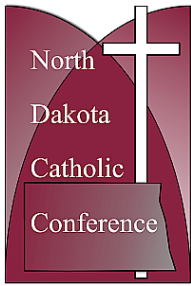
- Enabling parents, financially and in other ways, to choose the best educational setting for their children?
- Opposing policies that mandate acceptance of false gender ideologies?

Poor & Vulnerable

- Ensuring access to health care while respecting human life, human dignity, and the religious and conscience rights of health care providers?
- Providing services to those in need, especially families facing financial hardship, victims of human trafficking, and persons with disabilities, mental illness, and addictions?
- Protecting families and communities with a criminal justice system that focuses on restoration, rehabilitation, and prevention?
- Welcoming properly-vetted refugees, regardless of race, nationality, or religious affiliation?

Economy and Environment

- Ensuring a just wage, economic initiative, and pro-family work policies?
- Promoting family farms, rural communities, and a food system that respects the dignity of labor and workers?
- Respecting the right of local communities to manage their own affairs for the common good?
- Fostering stewardship of our natural resources?



Where Does the *Federal* Candidate Stand on . . .

Human Life

- Protecting unborn human life and ending abortion nationwide?
- Repealing the federal government's use of the death penalty?
- Prohibiting the use of federal funds to pay for abortions?
- Protecting the right of the states to create sanctuaries for life by legally protecting unborn human life?
- Promoting and funding policies and programs that help pregnant women, mothers, and newborns?

Religious Freedom

- Protecting the exercise of religion?
- Protecting the right of religious organizations to serve the public in accordance with their beliefs?

Family and Education

- Enabling parents, financially and in other ways, to choose the best educational setting for their children?
- Opposing policies that mandate acceptance of false gender ideologies?

Immigration

- Achieving comprehensive immigration reform that includes family reunification, border security, and humane border enforcement?
- Welcoming properly-vetted refugees, regardless of race, nationality, or religious affiliation?

The Poor and Vulnerable

- Ensuring access to health care while respecting human life, human dignity, and the religious and conscience rights of health care providers?
- Providing services to those in need, especially families facing financial hardship, victims of human trafficking, and persons with disabilities, mental illness, and addictions?
- Maintaining and increasing funding for poverty-focused development assistance to poor countries?

Economy and Environment

- Ensuring a just wage, economic initiative, and pro-family work policies?
- Promoting family farms, rural communities, and a food system that respects the dignity of labor and workers?
- Respecting the right of local communities to manage their own affairs for the common good?

Your Responsibility

In Catholic teaching, the laity has the primary responsibility in political affairs. That means it is your responsibility to find out where the candidates stand on the issues. It is also your responsibility to make sure the candidates take a stand on the issues.

Don't let the campaigns, newspapers, and special interest groups determine the issues. In North Dakota, most candidates still go door to door and make community appearances. Don't pass up any opportunity to ask the candidates where they stand on the important moral and social justice issues of the day.

The questions listed here can help Catholics make moral and prudential decisions about candidates and public policies. Please use this when contacting candidates. Some issues are more important than others. Some concern policies, like attacks on human life, that a Catholic can never support. Others involve an obligation to seek the common good. Catholics can legitimately disagree about how to address some other issues. All the issues, however, deserve our attention.