

Confraternity of Catholic Clergy 2024 Voters Guide

AUTHENTIC MORAL CITIZENSHIP

This guide is totally non-partisan. Neither this document nor the CCC endorses any particular political party or candidate for any elected office. The CCC intends this to be a tool to help voters make an intelligent decision and to bring their well formed conscience into the voting booth on Election Day. Responsible citizenship is an obligation of justice. Those who live in democratic republics have a moral duty to vote and participate in the political process for the common good. A Catholic should endeavor to affiliate with political parties that coincide with one's moral conscience and ensure that their policies and platforms do not endorse anything evil. Here are non-negotiable values & principles to be a responsible citizen

RIGHT TO LIFE – the first and most fundamental right of every human being that comes directly from our human nature made by God. All other rights and freedoms come from this. Injustices such as *abortion*, *euthanasia*, *genocide* and *terrorism* deliberately kill innocent human beings. Similarly, direct threats to the sanctity & dignity of human life, such as *human cloning* and *destructive research on human embryos*, are also intrinsically evil. These must always be opposed. Not all moral issues have the same moral weight as abortion and euthanasia as these directly kill innocent human lives. Therefore, one must rate this as the highest factor.

Since the President of the United States nominates potential Supreme Court Justices and U.S. Senators confirm or reject them, conscientious voters need to consider and weigh these possibilities when choosing candidates.

Other issues are important but do not rise to the same level as the right to life. When voting ask yourself if the candidate respects these principles & values or do they threaten them? Know where politicians stand on these critical topics and make an intelligent, moral choice. A Catholic cannot vote for a candidate who takes a position in favor of an intrinsic evil, such as abortion or euthanasia, if the voter's intent is to support that position. In such cases a Catholic would be guilty of formal cooperation in grave evil. Voting for them for other reasons (i.e., you do not agree with their position on abortion) would be material cooperation in evil. If there is reasonable certainty that the candidate will pursue such evil, then voting for him/her would also be cooperation in evil. When all candidates hold a position in favor of an intrinsic evil, the conscientious voter may vote for the candidate less likely to advance such a morally flawed position & more likely to pursue other authentic human goods (e.g., if both candidates are not 100% pro-life as one favors unrestricted abortions while the other is against most abortions except in cases of rape or incest, one may then choose the latter person who will save more innocent lives).

These criteria are based on the 2011 USCCB letter "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship" and the letter from the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith by then Cardinal Prefect, Josef Ratzinger (now Pope Benedict XVI) "Worthiness to Receive Holy Communion" in 2004

FREEDOM OF RELIGION & RELIGIOUS LIBERTY – separation does not mean elimination. Freedom of Religion (not *from* religion) includes but is not limited to Freedom of Worship. Faith communities (houses of worship, schools, hospitals or businesses), have the right to follow their moral principles. It is gross injustice to compel anyone to violate their conscience by *mandating* the *supplying or financing* of materials or activities deemed morally offensive (such as *contraceptives and abortion*). Church leaders have the right to preach, teach and publicly express their faith in accord with their sacred beliefs unfettered by government or civil authority.

The state (civil government) has no moral authority to mandate or permit minors to receive contraceptives, abortions, transgender operations/surgery. Parents are the primary teachers and guardians of their children

THE ECONOMY – RIGHT OF ACCESS TO NECESSARY GOODS – due to the fundamental right to life, persons also have the right of *access* to those goods necessary for the preservation of life (*food, clothes, shelter, education, work and medical care*). Access means being able to acquire either by purchasing or being in the employ of another in exchange for these essentials. Unfair wages and depriving an employer of fair work are both injustices. Economic laws and policies must allow for the reasonable access of citizens to what they need by giving them the opportunities to acquire them. We are obliged to help the poor but help means enabling them not making them dependent. Moral governing demands respecting both *solidarity & subsidiarity*. Unreasonable taxation is unjust

RIGHT OF PRIVATE *PROPERTY* – every person has the right to own private property; hence theft and vandalism are both criminal and sinful acts. *Seizing property* (possessions, land or money) without due process, fair compensation and serious reason is a great injustice *Forced redistribution* is not in conformity with the Gospel, either. Unsustainable debt, nationally or individually also threatens private ownership, whether now or in the near future.

IMMIGRATION - Catholic voters should consider candidates' policies and positions on the issue of immigration. While many aspects and details are considered prudential judgment and open to ongoing discussion and debate, certain moral principles must be recognized.

The American Bishops (USCCB) have said:

The Catholic Catechism instructs the faithful that good government has two duties, both of which must be carried out and neither of which can be ignored. The first duty is to welcome the foreigner out of charity and respect for the human person. The second duty is to secure one's border and enforce the law for the sake of the common good.

Persons have the right to apply for immigration and thus government must accommodate this right to the greatest extent possible, especially financially blessed nations

Governments have a duty is to secure one's border and enforce the law for the sake of the common good. Sovereign nations have the right to enforce their laws and all persons must respect the legitimate exercise of this right.

“Political authorities, for the sake of the common good for which they are responsible may make the exercise of the right to immigrate subject to various juridical conditions, especially with regard to the immigrants' duties toward their country of adoption. Immigrants are obliged to respect with gratitude the material and spiritual heritage of the country that receives them, to obey its laws and to assist in carrying civic burdens.” (CCC #2241)

Immigrants, whether legal or illegal, documented or undocumented, authorized or unauthorized, are human beings, and must always be treated with the same dignity and respect accorded every human person. Due process and the rule of law are necessary for society and the common good. National security and the limitations of resources cannot be ignored and must be taken into consideration as well as procedures for identifying and preventing potential terrorists from entrance into the country.