

Catholic Citizenship News Archive 2016

Catholic Citizenship News is the e-mail newsletter from the Diocese of Manchester Office of Public Policy. To learn more about CCN or to subscribe visit www.catholicnh.org/ccn.

Happy New Year from Catholic Citizenship News

Jan 5, 2016

Dear Friends,

Thank You!

So many times last year I was impressed by Catholics advocating for the common good: from the quiet witness of sidewalk counselors to the parish Catholic Citizenship Committee working to combat human trafficking and to the individuals contacting their elected officials for the first time.

We were overwhelmed at the turnout and enthusiasm of those who attended the first Catholic Day at the State House in March to learn about pressing issues and effective tools for communicating with legislators. We also were grateful that over 150 people attended our annual Catholics in the Public Square event in November to learn about religious freedom and the crisis in the Middle East.

Thank you for your efforts in 2015 to promote a culture where all life is respected – from the unborn child to the ill and elderly. Because of your hard work, New Hampshire once again defeated a bill to study assisted suicide, and the House Health & Human Services Committee voted 12-1 to recommend the House pass a bill to collect statistics about abortions when it meets again on January 6.

The Year Ahead

The text of all of the bills that have been filed in the 2016 session of the NH Legislature is not yet available. We know, however, that bills have been filed that would protect the unborn, study assisted suicide, and expand the death penalty, so we will need your help in our advocacy efforts. Please watch Catholic Citizenship News for updates on state and federal bills of interest to Catholics. And be sure to [follow us on Twitter @NHCatholicCitiz](#) to receive additional State House updates.

We wish you a blessed New Year.

Meredith P. Cook

Director, Office of Public Policy

mcook@rcbm.org

PS: Do you know someone who would be interested in staying informed on public issues of concern to New Hampshire Catholics? **Please forward this e-mail to a friend.**

NH Primary Voting Reminder

Feb 8, 2016

The eyes of the world will focus on New Hampshire tomorrow. We face great challenges as a nation, but we also are presented with great opportunities to build a future based upon the principles laid forth by Christ. May we take this opportunity seriously, obtain factual information about the candidates and their positions, and get out and vote tomorrow.

Where and when can I vote? What do I need to bring?

Visit the [website of the New Hampshire Secretary of State](#) to search your city or town and determine your polling location and the times of day when you will be able to vote.

Remember that all voters at the polls will be asked to show photo identification. If you do not present a photo ID, you will be permitted to vote after completing a “challenged voter affidavit,” and you will have your photograph taken by the moderator or assistant moderator. If you complete an affidavit, you will receive a verification letter from the Secretary of State after the election requesting confirmation you voted in the election. If you do not respond in writing within 90 days, the Attorney General will conduct an investigation to determine if fraudulent voting occurred. Visit the Voter ID page <http://sos.nh.gov/voterid.aspx> of the New Hampshire Secretary of State for more information, including an Explanatory Document with a list of approved forms of photo identification.

What are the issues?

The United States bishops have issued [Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship](#), a teaching document on the political responsibility of Catholics. This statement does not tell Catholics for whom or against whom to vote, but it instead highlights the role of the Church in helping Catholics evaluate issues by developing a well-formed conscience. In [Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship](#), the bishops present central and enduring principles of the Catholic social tradition that provide a moral framework for decisions in public life:

The Dignity of the Human Person

Subsidiarity

Common Good

Solidarity

[CLICK HERE](#) to read a summary of these issues as well as other resources on voting in New Hampshire. In a time when our nation struggles with many important issues including abortion, assisted suicide, poverty, immigration, the crisis in the Middle East, our call to care for God’s creation, and religious liberty, we hope you find these resources a helpful part of your reflection before exercising your right to vote tomorrow.

Thank you for your commitment to participating in our political process and considering how important your faith is in making a decision in tomorrow’s election. Know that you make a difference.



Meredith

Meredith P. Cook
Director, Office of Public Policy

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ACTION ALERT: Contact Your Representatives to Oppose Physician-Assisted Suicide Study

Apr 14, 2016

The New Hampshire House Judiciary Committee soon will consider SB 426, a bill to study doctor-prescribed suicide. Some claim there is no harm in studying physician-assisted suicide, but your help is needed to let your representatives know that even studying assisted suicide sends the message that suicide has a place in our society.

In reality, suicide is a tragedy. We should be working together to prevent it. Read our [talking points](#) and call your representatives today to let them know that our focus must be on improving compassionate end-of-life care -- not studying methods to hasten death for those diagnosed with a terminal illness.

How to Contact Your Representative

[CLICK HERE](#) to find the contact information for your representatives or call (603) 271-3661.

Thank you for your active participation in preserving the dignity of life. Know that you make a difference.



Meredith

Meredith P. Cook
Director, Office of Public Policy

NH House to Consider Bill to Study Physician-Assisted Suicide Next Week



May 3, 2016

Friends,

The New Hampshire House Judiciary Committee met last week to discuss SB 426, a bill establishing an end-of-life choices commission. You may recall from our e-mail a few weeks ago that this commission has been proposed with the primary focus to study doctor-prescribed suicide. The New Hampshire House of Representatives will vote on SB 426 on May 11 or 12, so I am writing to update you on changes to the bill and ask for your help.

The Judiciary Committee voted 9-7 to amend SB 426 to remove the language from the bill requiring the commission to study doctor-prescribed suicide. Several members of the Judiciary Committee supporting the amendment expressed that they want this to be a positive study focused on examining increased awareness of palliative care and the importance of executing an advance directive.

Unfortunately, even the revised language of SB 426 leaves the door open for the commission to study doctor-prescribed suicide, and sponsors of SB 426 have been clear in expressing that they introduced this bill for the purpose of studying this issue.

To be clear, the Catholic Church supports efforts to help patients seek death with true dignity. We support efforts such as palliative care which Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI called "a right belonging to every human being, one which we must all be committed to defend." Message of His Holiness Benedict XVI for the Fifteenth World Day of the Sick, December 8, 2006. And here in New Hampshire, at the state and parish

level, Catholics have been helping individuals understand the importance of completing advance directives and of making informed decisions about care at the end of life. If you have not done so already, I encourage you to take some time to read the updated version of [Three Beliefs: A Guide for New Hampshire Catholics on End-of-Life Decisions](#).

SB 426 remains a bill intended to study doctor-prescribed suicide, and suicide is a tragedy we should be working together to prevent. The New Hampshire House of Representatives will vote on SB 426 on May 11 or 12, so [read our talking points](#) and call your representatives today and urge them to oppose SB 426. Thank you for all you do to uphold the dignity of all human life.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Meredith".

Meredith P. Cook
Director, Office of Public Policy

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How to Contact Your Representatives

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Stay Informed on Issues of Concern to Catholics in New Hampshire

[SUBSCRIBE](#) to Catholic Citizenship News to not miss these important action alerts.

New Hampshire House Rejects Bill to Study Assisted Suicide

May 20, 2016

Friends,

Members of the New Hampshire House of Representatives stayed late last Wednesday night and just after 7:00 p.m. voted 123-174 to defeat SB 426, the bill to study physician-assisted suicide. In speaking with representatives, it is clear that contacts from constituents like you clearly made a difference in defeating this bill. Members were moved by their own experiences in caring for ill and elderly relatives and in the information they received from those who shared their journey as individuals with disabilities and caregivers. And on the floor during the debate, members spoke of how they were struck when individuals brought to their attention the inconsistency that would occur if we become a State working diligently on suicide prevention efforts for some in our society yet simultaneously studying the promotion of suicide for others.

Thank you to all of you who reached out to your elected officials to urge them to oppose SB 426. We are also grateful to all parish leaders who get the word out about bills throughout the session, and to our pastors who have been lifting up Church teaching on care at the end of life. Finally, we want to recognize the efforts of our friends, the Brain Injury Association of New Hampshire, who brought to legislators a special awareness of the message SB 426 would send to vulnerable populations at risk for suicide.

You may [click here to find out how your representative voted on SB 426](#). New Hampshire legislators are paid \$200 per two-year session and rarely acknowledged for the work they do, so if your representative voted "nay" on the motion of ought to pass with amendment on SB 426, I am sure a thank you note from you would be appreciated.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Meredith".

Meredith P. Cook
Director, Office of Public Policy

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Message from Bishop Libasci: Let Your Voice Be Heard on Conscience Protection

Jul 12, 2016

The United States Department of Health and Human Services recently declared that the State of California may continue forcing all health plans under its jurisdiction to cover elective abortions. Under this decision, HHS has allowed the State of California to force all employers – even churches – to fund and facilitate elective abortions in their health insurance plans.

Already we are hearing that states such as Washington and New York may be following California's lead, and this action by HHS will only prompt more states to follow. Your help is needed today to urge Congress to pass the Conscience Protection Act to make clear that sponsors or providers of health plans that do not include coverage for elective abortions cannot be the subject of discrimination. And this Act also will protect health care providers from being forced to pay for or participate in abortions. Right now, nurses threatened with loss of their jobs unless they assist in abortions have found they have no right to go to court for discrimination, but this Act would help protect them.

Call your members of Congress today and let's send the message: Government must not force hospitals, doctors, and nurses to stop offering life-affirming health care because they cannot in good conscience participate in destroying a human life.

The United States House will vote on Wednesday, so your voice is needed today. I know how busy you are and especially at this time of year, but please take just a few minutes to learn about this issue through the resources below and take action.

Grateful for all you do to protect the most vulnerable I remain,

Bishop Libasci



Here are actions you can take now:

1. **E-mail Congress**

2. **Contact your Representative:** by phone by calling the United States Capitol switchboard at 202-224-3121 or call his or her local office. You may find contact information for your Representative at www.house.gov (just enter your zip code in the top right corner).

3. **Follow on Twitter:**

[@usccbprolife](https://twitter.com/usccbprolife) - United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities

[@NHCatholicCitiz](https://twitter.com/NHCatholicCitiz) - Public policy updates from the Diocese of Manchester.

Learn more on this issue:

[Read News Release](#)

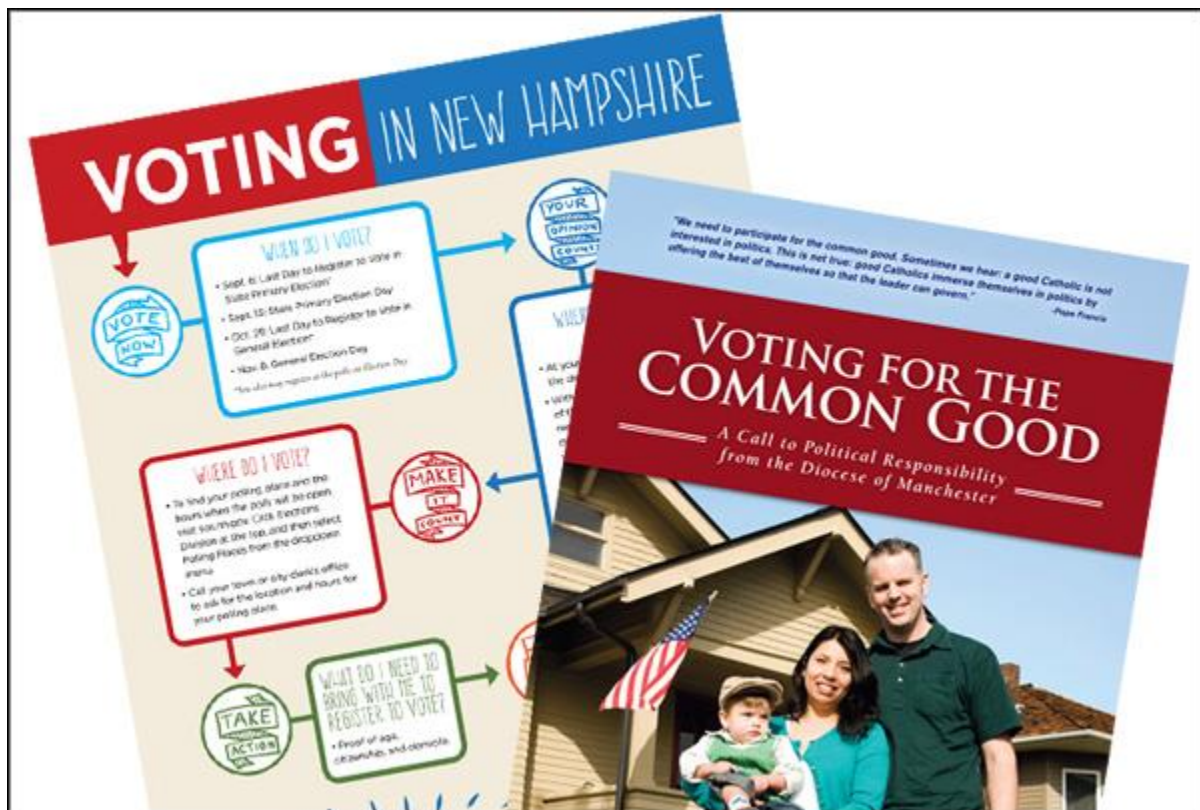
In response to the outrageous decision by HHS, Archbishop William Lori and Cardinal Timothy Dolan issued a news release in their respective capacities as chairmen of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty and the Committee on Pro-Life Activities.

[Download Fact Sheet](#)

The Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities also released a helpful Fact Sheet with questions and answers about the HHS decision.

Voting Resources for Catholics in New Hampshire

Sep 6, 2016



I hope you enjoyed a wonderful summer. It is difficult to believe Labor Day is behind us already!

In preparation for the fall elections, we are proud to announce the launch of Voting for the Common Good, an education and awareness drive dedicated to encouraging Catholic in New Hampshire to learn about Church teaching on today's pressing issues, pray as we form our consciences, and get out and vote.

In this issue of CCN, you'll find information on:

- Catholic Citizenship News Voter Series
- Voting for the Common Good
- Important Voting Dates
- Resources for Parishes and Schools
- Parable Magazine Election Features

In a time when our nation and our world struggle with the issues of human dignity, immigration, poverty, religious liberty, peace, and justice, we hope you find these resources a helpful part of your reflection before exercising your right to vote.



Thank you for your faithful citizenship,

Meredith P. Cook, Director
Office of Public Policy

PS: Do you know someone who would be interested in staying informed on public issues of concern to New Hampshire Catholics? **Please forward this e-mail to a friend.**

[CLICK HERE](#) if you would like to subscribe to Catholic Citizenship News (CCN).

New! CCN Voter Series

Starting in October, Catholic Citizenship News will feature a weekly program to help Catholics learn about Church teaching on today's pressing issues. The email series also will answer the questions most often received by our office about voting as a Catholic.

Voting for the Common Good - A Call to Political Responsibility

Bishop Peter A. Libasci developed a document, Voting for the Common Good, to assist Catholics and other people of good will in understanding the development of conscience and Church teaching on today's pressing issues.

Get a copy of Voting for the Common Good in the September/October issue of Parable and in your parish. [Read it online in English or Spanish](#). If you need additional copies, please feel free to contact me.

Important Voting Dates

- **September 13, 2016 - State Primary Election Day**
- October 29, 2016 - Last day to register to vote before the General Election*
- November 8, 2016 - General Election Day

*You may also register to vote on Election Day at the polling place.

For more information on voting in New Hampshire, including a summary of the state voter ID law, [visit the New Hampshire Secretary of State website](#).

[Download our infographic](#) on when and where to vote.

Resources for Parishes and Schools

Catholicnh.org has been updated with resources for parishes and schools, including prayer resources and political activity guidelines. [Download plans](#) and ideas designed for catechetical leaders, schools, youth ministers, and campus ministers.

Parable Magazine Includes Fall Election Features

In addition to Voting for the Common Good, the latest issue of Parable magazine includes:

- [Bishop Libasci's message](#) challenging Catholics in New Hampshire to raise up their voices and vote this fall.
 - [Father Michael Kerper's column](#) that answers the question: Am I obligated to vote?
-

Catholic Citizenship News Launches Voter Series

Oct 12, 2016

Today marks the launch of Voting for the Common Good, an education and awareness drive dedicated to encouraging Catholics in New Hampshire to learn about Church teaching on today's pressing issues, pray as we form our consciences, and get out and vote.

We face great challenges as a state and nation, but we are also presented with great opportunities to build a future based upon the principles laid forth by Christ. In this message and next week, we will look at issues of special concern for Catholic voters. In coming weeks, we will answer some of the questions we most frequently receive in our office about voting as a Catholic.

I hope you find this voter series a helpful part of your reflection as you make your final decisions about the candidates for office in your own district.

Meredith P. Cook, Director

Office of Public Policy

What Issues Merit Special Concern for Catholic Voters?

The Catholic approach to faithful citizenship rests on moral principles found in sacred Scripture and Catholic moral and social teaching as well as in the hearts of all people of good will. As Catholic voters, we are called to focus on the common good and what protects or threatens every human life. To assist Catholic voters as they form their consciences and reflect on the moral dimensions of their public choices, the bishops of the United States have offered the following policy goals they hope will provide guidance to Catholics:

The Dignity of the Human Person

It is fundamental to Catholic teaching that human beings are created in the image and likeness of God and that every life is to be respected from conception to natural death. We are called to protect human life

by restricting and bringing an end to the destruction of unborn children through abortion and providing women in crisis pregnancies with the supports they need. Catholics are urged to end the following practices: the use of euthanasia and assisted suicide; the destruction of human embryos in the name of research; the use of the death penalty to combat crime; and the imprudent resort to war to address international disputes.

Supporting Marriage and Families

The family - based upon the life-long and faithful union of one man and one woman - is the first and fundamental unit of society and a sanctuary for the creation and nurturing of children. How we organize our society - in economics and politics, in law and policy - directly affects the common good and the capacity of individuals to develop their full potential. Every person and association has a right and a duty to participate actively in shaping society and to promote the well-being of all, especially the poor and vulnerable.

Immigration

We are one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. Loving our neighbor has global dimensions and requires us to take up the Scriptural call to welcome the stranger among us - including immigrants seeking work, a safe home, education for their children, and a decent life for their families. The bishops of the United States have called for comprehensive immigration reform that offers a path to citizenship, treats immigrant workers fairly, prevents separation of families, maintains the integrity of our borders, respects the rule of law, and addresses the factors that compel people to leave their own countries.

Poverty and Protecting the Most Vulnerable

While the common good embraces all, those who are most in need deserve preferential concern. Our concern for the poor and vulnerable includes all who are marginalized in our nation and beyond - unborn children, persons with disabilities, the elderly, individuals with a terminal illness, victims of injustice and oppression, and immigrants. We are called to help individuals, families, and children overcome poverty and ensure access to decent work at fair, living wages and adequate assistance for the vulnerable in our nation while also helping to overcome widespread hunger and poverty around the world, especially in the policy areas of development assistance, debt relief, and international trade.

Coming Up Next Week

The Voting for the Common Good voter series continues next week by examining three remaining issues the bishops of the United States have offered as policy goals they hope will guide Catholics during this election year: conscience protection and religious freedom, pursuing peace, and caring for God's creation.

Where Can I Find More Information?

Look to these resources on voting as a Catholic in New Hampshire:

catholicnh.org/vote

Visit the [Voting for the Common Good webpage](#) on the Diocese of Manchester website for information on when and where to vote in New Hampshire, issues of concern to Catholics, and resources for parishes, educators, and campus ministers.

Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship

The bishops of the United States have offered a teaching document on the political responsibility of Catholics called, "[Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship](#)." The statement represents the guidance of the bishops for Catholics in the exercise of our rights and duties as participants in our democracy.

New Hampshire Secretary of State Website

For more information on voting in New Hampshire, including a summary of the state voter ID law visit the [NH State of Secretary website](#).

Voting in NH Infographic

[Download a copy](#) of our infographic on when and where to vote.

Important Voting Dates

October 29, 2016 - Last day to register to vote before the General Election*

November 8, 2016 - General Election Day

*You may also register to vote on Election Day at the polling place.

Catholic Citizenship News Voter Series

Oct 20, 2016

This fall, CCN features a weekly series dedicated to encouraging Catholics in New Hampshire to learn about Church teaching on today's pressing issues, pray as we form our consciences, and get out and vote. [Last week](#) and this week, we are looking at issues of special concern for Catholic voters. Starting next week, we will answer some of the questions we most frequently receive in our office about voting as a Catholic.

One of the issues addressed in this week's message is religious freedom. If you haven't read it yet, Archbishop Joseph Kurtz, President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, issued a statement addressing this same topic that you may find of interest. In his statement, Archbishop Kurtz urged Catholics "and all people of good will, to be good stewards of the precious rights we have inherited as citizens of this country." He also called upon those involved in the election process to "reflect our best aspirations as citizens."

[Read Bishop Kurtz's Statement on Religious Freedom](#)

Thank you for taking the time to learn about the issues as we prepare for election day.

Meredith P. Cook, Director

Office of Public Policy

What Issues Merit Special Concern for Catholic Voters?

Last week explained that the Catholic approach to faithful citizenship rests on moral principles found in sacred Scripture and Catholic moral and social teaching as well as in the hearts of all people of good will. As Catholic voters, we are called to focus on the common good and what protects or threatens every human life. To assist Catholic voters as they form their consciences and reflect on the moral dimensions of their public choices, the bishops of the United States have offered the policy goals they hope will provide guidance to Catholics. Last week, we summarized the policy goals of the Dignity of the Human Person, Supporting Marriage and Families, Immigration, and Poverty and Protecting the Most Vulnerable. This week, we complete our review of the policy goals offered by the bishops of the United States:

Conscience Protection and Religious Freedom

Human dignity is respected and the common good is fostered only if human rights are protected and basic responsibilities are met. Freedom of conscience and the rights of individuals and institutions to exercise religious freedom publicly and privately need to be constantly defended. Conscience protection and religious freedom needs to be ensured for individuals and groups to meet social needs and to enable families, community groups, economic structures, and government to work together to overcome poverty, pursue the common good, and care for creation.

Pursue Peace

The Gospel invites us to be peacemakers -- to promote peace and pursue justice at home and abroad. We are called to seek peace in a world marred by violence and conflict with a special view toward seeking a responsible and effective response for ending the persecution of Christians and other religious minorities in the Middle East and other parts of the world.

Caring for God's Creation

We have a duty to care for God's creation, or as Pope Francis refers to it, "our common home." Care for creation is a duty of our faith and a sign of our concern for all people, especially the poor who suffer the most devastating impact from attacks on the environment.

Coming Up Next Week

The Voting for the Common Good series continues next week with answers to frequently-asked questions about voting as a Catholic. Now that we have completed a review of the policy goals offered by the bishops of the United States, we will answer the frequent inquiry of how to approach these various issues.

Upcoming Event Not to Miss!

Catholics in the Public Square November 19
Understanding Human Trafficking and What You Can Do To Help

Think human trafficking doesn't happen in New Hampshire? The Granite State has had 171 reported victims since 2007. On November 19 from 9:00 am to Noon, join Bishop Peter A. Libasci at the 8th annual

Catholics in the Public Square event at the New Hampshire Institute of Politics at Saint Anselm College to learn from experts about the crisis of human trafficking. Jasmine Marino, a survivor and advocate for women currently enslaved, will share her message of survival, faith, and hope. Additional speakers will explain the types of trafficking, signs that a person is being trafficked, and what you can do to help. This event is free but advance registration is required at www.catholicnh.org/publicsquare or by contacting Kimberly Low at klow@rcbm.org or (603) 663-0131.

Where Can I Find More Information?

Look to these resources on voting as a Catholic in New Hampshire:

catholicnh.org/vote

Visit the [Voting for the Common Good webpage](#) on the Diocese of Manchester website for information on when and where to vote in New Hampshire, issues of concern to Catholics, and resources for parishes, educators, and campus ministers.

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Important Voting Dates

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November 8, 2016 - General Election Day

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Message From Bishop Libasci: Why don't bishops tell us who to vote for?

Oct 28, 2016

"Why don't bishops tell us who to vote for?"

I hear this question over and over from people who want bishops to identify particular candidates that Catholics must vote for or against. The answer to this question is an important one.

In the very first chapter of the Book of Acts, we see 120 disciples gathered with Peter. The job at hand is to choose a replacement for Judas and to restore the fellowship of "The Twelve." Significantly, however, it is not Peter who makes the selection. Rather it is the assembly of the faithful that proposes two names, from which one (Matthias) is chosen by the drawing of lots. Notice that Peter does not use his office to compel a particular result, but rather he leaves the choice to the Holy Spirit working through the company of believers.

Now, an American election is obviously a far different sort of thing. But the point of that narrative from Acts is the same one that underlies why we bishops do not instruct the faithful to vote for or against particular candidates: there are certain rights and responsibilities that the Church entrusts to bishops, and there are certain rights and responsibilities that the Church entrusts to the lay faithful.

How each one of us carries out the awesome responsibility of our baptism depends on our particular calling in life. Bishops accompany the People of God and carry out the ministry of teaching. The lay faithful are called, among other things, "to cultivate a properly formed conscience and to impress the divine law on the affairs of the earthly city" (to quote from chapter 43 of the Second Vatican Council's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World). The Church recognizes that expertise in secular matters, and in particular the affairs of the political world, rests with the laity. As the Constitution goes on to say:

Let [the lay faithful] realize that their pastors will not always be so expert as to have a ready answer to every problem (even every grave problem) that arises: this is not the role of the clergy: it is rather up to the laity to shoulder their responsibilities under the guidance of Christian wisdom and with eager attention to the teaching authority of the Church.

If you are reading Catholic Citizenship News, you may be familiar with [Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship](#). This teaching document lays out the issues which we think are indispensable for Catholics to consider if they are to cast votes with well-formed consciences. Faithful Citizenship is an important way that we bishops have tried to help you in your decision-making in this election. If we have provided you with the tools, however, it is up to each one of you to actually put those tools to use.

As the publication of Faithful Citizenship would show, there are also some practical reasons why bishops do not endorse candidates. If for instance a particular candidate were to be so manifestly unfit that no Catholic could in good conscience vote for that candidate, a bishop's instruction to vote a particular way

would be pointless because the lay faithful, after considering the issues that are set out in Faithful Citizenship, would undoubtedly reach the proper conclusion on their own. If, on the other hand, there is legitimate disagreement among people with well-formed consciences regarding how an election should turn out, then bishops in various dioceses might actually issue endorsements for different candidates. So it is wise for the Church to have faith in the faithful.

The Holy Father recently made some informal remarks concerning what we should do in this election, and I think his advice is the best way to conclude this: "Study the issues well, pray, and choose with your conscience." Here at the end of 2016, the responsibility for what you do on election day lies just where the Holy Spirit put it on the day that you were baptized: in your hands. May that same Spirit guide you as you cast your votes on November 8th.



Sincerely in Christ,

Bishop Libasci

PS - Next week in this voter series we'll answer more of your frequently asked questions. Until then, visit catholicnh.org/vote to find resources to help you prepare for the election.

How do I sort out all of the issues of interest to Catholic voters?

Nov 3, 2016

Voting for the Common Good

Election Day is only 5 days away. And as you make your final choices, it may be helpful to know that the resources and principles we apply in forming our conscience as Catholic voters are not limited to the election for our next president but also apply to other important races on the ballot. In New Hampshire next week, we also will vote for a United States Senator and members of the United States House of Representatives, as well as our state Governor, senators and representatives. These officials will have great influence on many policy decisions, and it is important we take the time to consider these positions before we vote.

Our website includes resources on voting as a concerned Catholic, but we also have included practical information on voting in New Hampshire such as a link to sample ballots to help you view candidates in advance.

As we near the end of our weekly voter series, we answer another question we frequently receive in our office about voting as a Catholic: how do I sort out all of the issues of interest to Catholic voters? Next week, after our votes have been cast, we will conclude the series with a look at what you can do to participate in political life.



I know how busy you are, and this election has many feeling tired and dismayed. But I hope that if you have not done so already that you will take some time this weekend to evaluate some of the elections that are not at the top of the ballot but will have great influence on policy decisions.

Thank you for taking the time to learn about the issues as we prepare for election day.

Meredith P. Cook, Director

Office of Public Policy

How do I sort out all of the issues of interest to Catholic voters?

One of the most beautiful but sometimes lesser known aspects of the Catholic faith is its social teaching - a rich tradition of wisdom about building a just society and living lives of holiness amidst the challenges of the modern world.

We summarized many of the principles of Catholic social teaching in earlier issues of Catholic Citizenship News by highlighting the policy goals the bishops of the United States have offered.

- [CCN Voter Series Part 1](#)
- [CCN Voter Series Part 2](#)

Taking in all of this information about the issues of concern to Catholic voters can be overwhelming and may lead some to treat all of the issues equally. But some issues are more important than others and should bear more weight when we vote. The direct and intentional destruction of human life from the moment of conception to natural death, such as through abortion or euthanasia, is always wrong and is not just one issue among many.

At the same time, we cannot use this moral distinction as a way to dismiss or ignore other serious threats to human life and dignity. Failing to respond to those who are suffering from hunger or a lack of health care, racism and other unjust discrimination, the use of the death penalty, the use of torture, or an unjust immigration policy are all serious moral issues that challenge our consciences and require us to act. These are not optional concerns which can be dismissed. Catholics are urged to seriously consider Church teaching on these issues. Although choices about how best to respond to these and other compelling threats to human life and dignity are matters for principled debate and decision, this does not make them optional concerns or permit Catholics to dismiss or ignore Church teaching on these important issues.



for?

Why don't bishops tell us who to vote

Bishop Libasci answers this commonly asked question in his latest message in Catholic Citizenship News. [Read Bishop Libasci's Message](#)

Voting Resources from the Diocese of Manchester

For more information for Catholics on voting including the "Voting For the Common Good" bulletin, visit our website catholicnh.org/vote.

Cathedral open tonight for Mass and prayerful reflection tomorrow + voting reminders

Nov 7, 2016

Election Day is Tomorrow

Many eyes will be turned upon New Hampshire tomorrow. We face great challenges as a nation, but we also are presented with great opportunities to build a future based upon the principles laid forth by Christ. May we use these final hours to obtain factual information about the candidates on our ballots and their positions, pray about our votes, and then in good conscience select the candidates.

I hope you find these resources helpful as you make your final decisions and exercise your right to vote tomorrow.

Meredith P. Cook, Director

Office of Public Policy

Where and When Can I Vote? What do I Need to Bring?

[Visit the website of the New Hampshire Secretary of State](#) to search your city or town and determine your polling location and the times of day when you will be able to vote. This same link will take you to a sample ballot for your polling location.

Remember that all voters at the polls will be asked to show photo identification. If you do not present a photo ID, you will be permitted to vote after completing a "challenged voter affidavit." [Visit the Voter ID page](#) of the New Hampshire Secretary of State including an Explanatory Document with a list of approved forms of photo identification.

Resources to Learn More about Catholic Teaching and Voting

Bishop Libasci developed a document, *Voting for the Common Good*, to assist Catholics and other interested persons in understanding the nature of conscience, the moral obligation to vote, and Church teaching on today's pressing issues. Visit our website to find a copy of [Voting for the Common Good](#) and other helpful resources about Catholic teaching and voting in New Hampshire.

This fall, Catholic Citizenship News featured a weekly series to help Catholics learn about the Church teaching on today's pressing issues and to answer frequently-asked questions. [Read our most recent issues of Catholic Citizenship News.](#)

Mass for America Tonight at Saint Joseph Cathedral, Manchester

All are welcome to Saint Joseph Cathedral in Manchester tonight at 6:30 p.m. for a Mass for our Nation to ask God to guide us all not only on Election Day but on the days that will follow. The Mass will not be a time to pray for one candidate or another, nor to cheer on one party on another. Instead, the Divine Liturgy will be an opportunity for all to gather before almighty God and ask him to guide us as we go forward to bring healing and peace to our hearts and to restore hope in all things.

Are you seeking a space for prayerful reflection?

The doors of the Cathedral are open today for those who may be seeking a space for prayerful reflection, and the doors will be open again tomorrow during voting hours (6 a.m. to 7 p.m.).

Saint Joseph Cathedral is located at 145 Lowell Street in Manchester (at the corner of Pine and Lowell Streets).

A Look Ahead at the 2017 New Hampshire Legislative Session

Dec 29, 2016



While the text of many of the bills has not yet been made available, we already know we will be asking for your help to support measures in the New Hampshire Legislature to collect abortion statistics and to repeal the abortion clinic buffer zone. But we also will be reaching out for your help to defeat a measure aimed at expanding the state death penalty.

And you may have seen in the news that there are several bills to decriminalize, legalize, and regulate marijuana. We will take a closer look at these bills once the text is available, but we have serious concerns based upon what we have heard so far. Marijuana is widely used and abused, particularly by young people under the age of eighteen, and scientific evidence links its long-term damaging effects on brain development. According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, “the use of drugs inflicts very grave damage on human health and life. Their use, except on strictly therapeutic grounds, is a grave offense.” (note 2291). We will be watching closely for the text of these and other bills and will update you in January. **Be sure to follow us on Twitter @NHCatholicCitiz** to receive additional State House updates in between.

I know that 2016 was an exhausting year for many. Some of you worked on campaigns during the New Hampshire Primary and never took a break and then worked for candidates or on issues during the State primary and general election. And everyone seems to have experienced fatigue from the coverage and commercials, regardless of how they felt about the results of various elections for offices. But during this

season, I hope that the presence of Christ will bring new life and joy to you and your loved ones as you celebrate the feast of His birth -- both now and throughout the new year ahead.



Grateful for all your efforts to promote a culture of life and serve the common good,

Meredith P. Cook
Director, Office of Public Policy

Save the Date – Catholic Day at the State House

Join Bishop Libasci and Catholics throughout the Granite State on **Thursday, March 9, 2017**. for Catholic Day at the State House to learn how you can make a difference by advocating for justice and the common good. Events will take place at the State House and Holiday Inn in Concord, New Hampshire. Additional information and details will be coming soon and will be posted to www.catholicnh.org/CatholicDay. This event will be offered at no charge to participants and will include lunch. Plan to be in Concord on March 9 and watch Catholic Citizenship News for more information!
