

ELECTION 2016

The Candidates, the Issues And Church Teaching

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As Catholics form their consciences in preparation to vote in the 2016 election, one of our key tasks is to be informed about the issues. Where do the two major presidential candidates and their parties stand on the most important issues facing the country? For Catholics, understanding the positions of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump, as well as the Democratic and Republican Parties, is essential in making an informed decision on how to vote. It is also key in helping family, friends and colleagues make an equally enlightened choice on Nov. 8. The National Catholic Register is pleased to offer this special section on the candidates, the issues and Church teaching. Each section includes brief excerpts on what the Church or Church leaders teach about important topics (e.g., abortion, religious liberty, family life and the death penalty), followed by the actual words or pledges of the candidates and the two parties. We hope that you find this guide helpful in your prayerful discernment.



Democratic Party



Republican Party



Church Teaching



Hillary Clinton



Donald Trump

Life Issues

Abortion

“Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. From the first moment of his existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person — among which is the inviolable right of every innocent being to life. ... Since the first century the Church has affirmed the moral evil of every procured abortion. This teaching has not changed and remains unchangeable. Direct abortion, that is to say, abortion willed either as an end or a means, is gravely contrary to the moral law. ... Formal cooperation in an abortion constitutes a grave offense. The Church attaches the canonical penalty of excommunication to this crime against human life” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2270-2272).

“Democrats are committed to protecting and advancing reproductive health, rights and justice. “We believe unequivocally, like the majority of Americans, that every woman should have access to quality reproductive health-care services, including safe and legal abortion. ... We recognize that quality, affordable, comprehensive health care, evidence-based sex education and a full range of family-planning services help reduce the number of unintended pregnancies and thereby also reduce the need for abortions.”

Roe v. Wade (along with Doe v. Bolton, the Supreme Court cases that legalized abortion in the United States) “is the touchstone of our reproductive freedom, the embodiment of our most fundamental rights, and no one — no judge, no governor, no senator, no president — has the right to take it away” (HillaryClinton.com).

“The Constitution’s guarantee that no one can ‘be deprived of life, liberty or property’ deliberately echoes the Declaration of Independence’s proclamation that ‘all’ are ‘endowed by their Creator’ with the inalienable right to life. Accordingly, we assert the sanctity of human life and affirm that the unborn child has a fundamental right to life which cannot be infringed. We support a human-life amendment to the Constitution and legislation to make clear that the Fourteenth Amendment’s protections apply to children before birth.”

“I am committed to: nominating pro-life justices to the U.S. Supreme Court; signing into law the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act, which would end painful late-term abortions nationwide ... making the Hyde Amendment permanent law to protect taxpayers from having to pay for abortions” (Donald Trump letter, September 2016, forming a “Pro-Life Coalition”).

Taxpayer Funding for Abortion

“The federal government should not use its funding power to support and promote elective abortion and should not force taxpayers to subsidize this violence. Even public officials who take a ‘pro-choice’ stand, and courts that have insisted on a constitutional ‘right’ to abortion, have agreed that the government has every right (in the Supreme Court’s words) to ‘encourage childbirth over abortion’” (Cardinal Sean O’Malley, archbishop of Boston and chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities, 2015).

“We will continue to oppose — and seek to overturn — federal and state laws and policies that impede a woman’s access to abortion, including by repealing the Hyde Amendment. ... We will continue to stand up to Republican efforts to defund Planned Parenthood health centers, which provide critical health services to millions of people.”

“Hillary is proud to have earned the endorsement of the Planned Parenthood Action Fund. She will always defend the essential health and reproductive care that Planned Parenthood provides for women” (HillaryClinton.com).

“We oppose the use of public funds to perform or promote abortion or to fund organizations, like Planned Parenthood, so long as they provide or refer for elective abortions or sell fetal body parts rather than provide health care.”

“As far as Planned Parenthood is concerned, I’m pro-life. I’m totally against abortion, having to do with Planned Parenthood. But millions and millions of women — cervical cancer, breast cancer — are helped by Planned Parenthood. But I would defund it, because I’m pro-life” (2016 CNN-Telemundo Republican debate on eve of Texas Primary, Feb. 25, 2016).

Embryonic Stem-Cell Research

“Cloning and destruction of human embryos for research or even for potential cures are always wrong” (U.S. bishops’ “Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship”).

“We oppose federal funding of embryonic stem-cell research. ... We call for expanded support for the stem-cell research that now offers the greatest hope for many afflictions — through adult stem cells, umbilical cord blood and cells reprogrammed into pluripotent stem cells — without the destruction of embryonic human life. We urge a ban on human cloning for research or reproduction and a ban on the creation of, or experimentation on, human embryos for research.”

“Today’s vote in the House is a critical step toward realizing the potential of [embryonic] stem-cell research, which holds great hope of providing cures for chronic, incurable conditions from which millions of Americans suffer” (Statement of Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton on House passage of stem-cell research legislation, June 7, 2007).

“I would say that I’d like to get back to you, because I’m studying it very closely. It’s an issue, don’t forget, that as a businessman I’ve never been involved in” (Interview with the Des Moines Register, April 2016).

Assisted Suicide

“Those whose lives are diminished or weakened deserve special respect. Sick or handicapped persons should be helped to lead lives as normal as possible. Whatever its motives and means, direct euthanasia consists in putting an end to the lives of handicapped, sick or dying persons. It is morally unacceptable. Thus an act or omission which, of itself or by intention, causes death in order to eliminate suffering constitutes a murder gravely contrary to the dignity of the human person and to the respect due to the living God, his Creator” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2276-2277).

“We oppose the non-consensual withholding of care or treatment from people with disabilities, including newborns, the elderly and infirm, just as we oppose euthanasia and assisted suicide, which endanger especially those on the margins of society. We urge the Drug Enforcement Administration to restore its ban on the use of controlled substances for physician-assisted suicide.”

“I have a great deal of sympathy for people who are in difficult end-of-life situations. I’ve gone to friends who have been in great pain and suffering at the end of their lives. I’ve never been personally confronted with it, but I know it’s a terribly difficult decision that should never be forced upon anyone. So with appropriate safeguards and informed decision-making, I think it’s an appropriate right to have” (Interview with the Register Guard newspaper, as quoted by TalkLeft.com, April 6, 2008).

Religious Liberty



“Freedom is exercised in relationships between human beings. Every human person, created in the image of God, has the natural right to be recognized as a free and responsible being. All owe to each other this duty of respect. The right to the exercise of freedom, especially in moral and religious matters, is an inalienable requirement of the dignity of the human person. This right must be recognized and protected by civil authority within the limits of the common good and public order. ... The political community has a duty to honor the family, to assist it and to ensure especially:

- the freedom to establish a family, have children and bring them up in keeping with the family’s own moral and religious convictions;
- the protection of the stability of the marriage bond and the institution of the family;
- the freedom to profess one’s faith, to hand it on, and raise one’s children in it, with the necessary means and institutions;
- the right to private property, to free enterprise, to obtain work and housing and the right to emigrate;
- in keeping with the country’s institutions, the right to medical care, assistance for the aged and family benefits;
- the protection of security and health, especially with respect to dangers like drugs, pornography, alcoholism, etc.;
- the freedom to form associations with other families and so to have representation before civil authority” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1738; 2211).



“We will oppose all state efforts to discriminate against LGBT individuals, including legislation that restricts the right to access public spaces. We support a progressive vision of religious freedom that respects pluralism and rejects the misuse of religion to discriminate.”



“Ongoing attempts to compel individuals, businesses and institutions of faith to transgress their beliefs are part of a misguided effort to undermine religion and drive it from the public square. As a result, many charitable religious institutions that have demonstrated great success in helping the needy have been barred from receiving government grants and contracts. Government officials threaten religious colleges and universities with massive fines and seek to control their personnel decisions. Places of worship for the first time in our history have reason to fear the loss of tax-exempt status merely for espousing and practicing traditional religious beliefs that have been held across the world for thousands of years and for almost four centuries in America. We value the right of America’s religious leaders to preach, and Americans to speak freely, according to their faith. ... We pledge to defend the religious beliefs and rights of conscience of all Americans and to safeguard religious institutions against government control.”



“Far too many women are denied access to reproductive health care and safe childbirth, and laws don’t count for much if they’re not enforced. Rights have to exist in practice — not just on paper. Laws have to be backed up with resources and political will. And deep-seated cultural codes, religious beliefs and structural biases have to be changed. As I have said and as I believe, the advancement of the full participation of women and girls in every aspect of their societies is the great unfinished business of the 21st century and not just for women, but for everyone — and not just in faraway countries, but right here in the United States” (Hillary Clinton, Women in the World Summit, April 23, 2015).



“An amendment, pushed by Lyndon Johnson, many years ago, threatens religious institutions with a loss of their tax-exempt status if they openly advocate their political views. Their voice has been taken away. I will work hard to repeal that language and to protect free speech for all Americans” (2016 Republican National Convention Speech).



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Immigration



"Immigration can be a resource for development rather than an obstacle to it. In the modern world, where there are still grave inequalities between rich countries and poor countries, and where advances in communications quickly reduce distances, the immigration of people looking for a better life is on the increase. These people come from less privileged areas of the earth, and their arrival in developed countries is often perceived as a threat to the high levels of well-being achieved thanks to decades of economic growth. In most cases, however, immigrants fill a labor need which would otherwise remain unfilled in sectors and territories where the local workforce is insufficient or unwilling to engage in the work in question. ... Institutions in host countries must keep careful watch to prevent the spread of the temptation to exploit foreign laborers, denying them the same rights enjoyed by nationals, rights that are to be guaranteed to all without discrimination. Regulating immigration according to criteria of equity and balance is one of the indispensable conditions for ensuring that immigrants are integrated into society with the guarantees required by recognition of their human dignity. Immigrants are to be received as persons and helped, together with their families, to become a part of societal life. In this context, the right of reuniting families should be respected and promoted. At the same time, conditions that foster increased work opportunities in people's place of origin are to be promoted as much as possible" (Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 297-298).



"The Democratic Party supports legal immigration, within reasonable limits, that meets the needs of families, communities and the economy, as well as maintains the United States' role as a beacon of hope for people seeking safety, freedom and security. People should come to the United States with visas and not through smugglers. Yet we recognize that the current immigration system is broken. More than 11 million people are living in the shadows, without proper documentation."



"Hillary will introduce comprehensive immigration reform with a pathway to full and equal citizenship within her first 100 days in office. It will treat every person with dignity, fix the family visa backlog, uphold the rule of law, protect our borders and national security, and bring millions of hardworking people into the formal economy. "The estimated 5 million people eligible for DAPA — including DREAMers and parents of Americans and lawful residents — should be protected under the executive actions."

- Do everything possible under the law to protect families.
- Enforce immigration laws humanely.
- End family detention and close private immigration detention centers.
- Promote naturalization" (*HillaryClinton.com*).



"Our system must protect American working families and their wages, for citizens and legal immigrants alike, in a way that will improve the economy. Just as immigrant labor helped build our country in the past, today's legal immigrants are making vital contributions in every aspect of national life. ... America's immigration policy must serve the national interest of the United States, and the interests of American workers must be protected over the claims of foreign nationals seeking the same jobs."



- Begin working on an impenetrable physical wall on the southern border, on Day One. Mexico will pay for the wall.
- End catch-and-release.
- Move criminal aliens out Day One, in joint operations with local, state and federal law enforcement.
- End sanctuary cities.
- Immediately terminate President Obama's two illegal executive amnesties. All immigration laws will be enforced.
- Suspend the issuance of visas to any place where adequate screening cannot occur, until proven and effective vetting mechanisms can be put into place.
- Ensure that other countries take their people back when we order them deported.
- Ensure that a biometric entry-exit visa tracking system is fully implemented at all land, air and sea ports.
- Turn off the jobs and benefits magnet.
- Reform legal immigration to serve the best interests of America and its workers (*DonaldJTrump.com*).

Education



"As those first responsible for the education of their children, parents have the right to choose a school for them which corresponds to their own convictions. This right is fundamental. As far as possible parents have the duty of choosing schools that will best help them in their task as Christian educators. Public authorities have the duty of guaranteeing this parental right and of ensuring the concrete conditions for its exercise" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2229).

"Parents have the right to choose the formative tools that respond to their convictions and to seek those means that will help them best to fulfill their duty as educators, in the spiritual and religious sphere also. Public authorities have the duty to guarantee this right and to ensure the concrete conditions necessary for it to be exercised. In this context, cooperation between the family and scholastic institutions takes on primary importance. ... Parents have the right to found and support educational institutions. Public authorities must see to it that 'public subsidies are so allocated that parents are truly free to exercise this right without incurring unjust burdens. Parents should not have to sustain, directly or indirectly, extra charges which would deny or unjustly limit the exercise of this freedom.' The refusal to provide public economic support to non-public schools that need assistance and that render a service to civil society is to be considered an injustice. Whenever the state lays claim to an educational monopoly, it oversteps its rights and offends justice. ... The state cannot without injustice merely tolerate so-called private schools. Such schools render a public service and therefore have a right to financial assistance" (Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 240-241).



"Democrats are committed to providing parents with high-quality public-school options and expanding these options for low-income youth. We support democratically governed, great neighborhood public schools and high-quality public charter schools, and we will help them disseminate best practices to other school leaders and educators. ... Democrats oppose for-profit charter schools focused on making a profit off of public resources. We believe that high-quality public charter schools should provide options for parents, but should not replace or destabilize traditional public schools. Charter schools must reflect their communities, and thus must accept and retain proportionate numbers of students of color, students with disabilities and English Language Learners in relation to their neighborhood public schools."



- Promote sexual education across schools in America.
- Make preschool universal for every 4-year-old in America.
- Significantly increase child-care investments so that no family in America has to pay more than 10% of its income to afford high-quality child care.
- Improve the quality of child care and early learning by giving the Respect and Increased Salaries for Early Childhood Educators (RAISE) initiative to America's child-care workforce.
- Double our investment in Early Head Start and the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership program.
- Expand access to evidence-based home-visiting programs (*HillaryClinton.com*).



"Education is much more than schooling. It is the whole range of activities by which families and communities transmit to a younger generation, not just knowledge and skills, but ethical and behavioral norms and traditions. It is the handing over of a cultural identity. ... Parents are a child's first and foremost educators and have primary responsibility for the education of their children. Parents have a right to direct their children's education, care and upbringing. We support a constitutional amendment to protect that right from interference by states, the federal government or international bodies such as the United Nations. We reject a one-size-fits-all approach to education and support a broad range of choices for parents and children at the state and local level. ... We support options for learning, including home-schooling, career and technical education, private or parochial schools, magnet schools, charter schools, online learning and early-college high schools."



"School choice is at the center of this civil-rights agenda, and my goal is to provide every single inner-city child in America that is trapped in a failing government school the freedom to attend the school of their choice. Competition — the schools will get better and better. And that means a private school, a religious school, a charter school or a magnet school. School choice also means that parents can home-school their children. ... This proposal begins with a \$20-billion block grant from the federal government for states to pursue school-choice programs. ... However, because 90% of education spending is at the state level, I will campaign to get the states to reallocate another \$110 billion of their education budgets to school-choice programs" (Donald Trump, Faith and Values Voter Summit, Sept. 9, 2016).

Family Life



"The family is the original cell of social life. It is the natural society in which husband and wife are called to give themselves in love and in the gift of life. Authority, stability and a life of relationships within the family constitute the foundations for freedom, security and fraternity within society. The family is the community in which, from childhood, one can learn moral values, begin to honor God and make good use of freedom. Family life is an initiation into life in society. ... The family should live in such a way that its members learn to care and take responsibility for the young, the old, the sick, the handicapped and the poor. There are many families who are at times incapable of providing this help. It devolves then on other persons, other families and, in a subsidiary way, society to provide for their needs: 'Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction and to keep oneself unstained from the world.' ... The family must be helped and defended by appropriate social measures. Where families cannot fulfill their responsibilities, other social bodies have the duty of helping them and of supporting the institution of the family. Following the principle of subsidiarity, larger communities should take care not to usurp the family's prerogatives or interfere in its life. ... The importance of the family for the life and well-being of society entails a particular responsibility for society to support and strengthen marriage and the family. Civil authority should consider it a grave duty 'to acknowledge the true nature of marriage and the family, to protect and foster them, to safeguard public morality and promote domestic prosperity'" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2207-2210).



"Democrats applaud last year's decision by the Supreme Court that recognized that LGBT people — like other Americans — have the right to marry the person they love. ... We support a progressive vision of religious freedom that respects pluralism and rejects the misuse of religion to discriminate."



"LGBT Americans are our colleagues, our teachers, our soldiers, our friends, our loved ones — and they are full and equal citizens and deserve the rights of citizenship. That includes marriage" (Message for the Human Rights Campaign's Americans for Marriage Equality, 2012).

"Democrats will make sure that the United States finally enacts national paid family and medical leave by passing a family and medical leave act that would provide all workers at least 12 weeks of paid leave to care for a new child or address a personal or family member's serious health issue. We will fight to allow workers the right to earn at least seven days of paid sick leave. We will also encourage employers to provide paid vacation. Our work and family policies must also help family caregivers. ... Hillary will work with Congress to pass the Equality Act, continue President Obama's LGBT equality executive actions, and support efforts under way in the courts to protect people from discrimination on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation in every aspect of public life. ... Hillary will end so-called 'conversion therapy' for minors, combat youth homelessness by ensuring adequate funding for safe and welcoming shelters, and take on bullying and harassment in schools. She'll end discriminatory treatment of LGBT families in adoptions and protect LGBT elders against discrimination. ... [She will] guarantee up to 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave to care for a new child or a seriously ill family member and up to 12 weeks of medical leave to recover from a serious illness or injury of their own. ... She will promote sexual education across schools in America" (*HillaryClinton.com*).



"Foremost among those institutions is the American family. It is the foundation of civil society, and the cornerstone of the family is natural marriage, the union of one man and one woman. We oppose policies and laws that create a financial incentive for or encourage cohabitation. ... The data and the facts lead to an inescapable conclusion: Every child deserves a married mom and dad. ... We support measures such as the First Amendment Defense Act to ensure these entities do not face government discrimination because of their views on marriage and family."



"Rewriting the tax code to allow working parents to deduct from their income taxes child-care expenses for up to four children and elderly dependents; allow parents to enroll in tax-free dependent care savings accounts for their children or elderly relatives; provide low-income households an Expanded Earned Income Tax Credit. ... The Trump plan would create new Dependent Care Savings Accounts (DCSAs) so that families can set aside extra money to foster their children's development and offset elder care for their parents or adult dependents. ... The Trump plan will guarantee six weeks of paid maternity leave by amending the existing unemployment insurance (UI) that companies are required to carry" (*DonaldJTrump.com*).

Capital Punishment



"The efforts of the state to curb the spread of behavior harmful to people's rights and to the basic rules of civil society correspond to the requirement of safeguarding the common good. Legitimate public authority has the right and duty to inflict punishment proportionate to the gravity of the offense. Punishment has the primary aim of redressing the disorder introduced by the offense. When it is willingly accepted by the guilty party, it assumes the value of expiation. Punishment then, in addition to defending public order and protecting people's safety, has a medicinal purpose: As far as possible, it must contribute to the correction of the guilty party. ... Assuming that the guilty party's identity and responsibility have been fully determined, the traditional teaching of the Church does not exclude recourse to the death penalty, if this is the only possible way of effectively defending human lives against the unjust aggressor. If, however, non-lethal means are sufficient to defend and protect people's safety from the aggressor, authority will limit itself to such means, as these are more in keeping with the concrete conditions of the common good and more in conformity to the dignity of the human person. Today, in fact, as a consequence of the possibilities which the state has for effectively preventing crime, by rendering one who has committed an offense incapable of doing harm — without definitely taking away from him the possibility of redeeming himself — the cases in which the execution of the offender is an absolute necessity 'are very rare, if not practically nonexistent'" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2266-2267).



"We will abolish the death penalty, which has proven to be a cruel and unusual form of punishment. It has no place in the United States of America. The application of the death penalty is arbitrary and unjust. The cost to taxpayers far exceeds those of life imprisonment. It does not deter crime."



"You know, this is such a profoundly difficult question. And what I have said — and what I continue to believe — is that the states have proven themselves incapable of carrying out fair trials that give any defendant all of the rights a defendant should have, all of the support that the defendant's lawyer should have. And I have said I would breathe a sigh of relief if either the Supreme Court or the states themselves began to eliminate the death penalty. Where I end up is this — and maybe it's a distinction that is hard to support — but at this point, given the challenges we face from terrorist activities, primarily in our country, that end up under federal jurisdiction, for very limited purposes, I think that it can still be held in reserve for those. And the kind of crimes that I am thinking of are the bombing at Oklahoma City, where an American terrorist blew up the government building, killing, as I recall, 158 Americans, including a number of children who were in the preschool program; the plotters and the people who carried out the attacks on 9/11, but a very limited use of it in cases where there have been horrific mass killings. That is really the exception that I still am struggling with, and that would only be in the federal system" (Town-hall meeting, CNN, March 2016).



"[T]he next president must not sow seeds of division and distrust between the police and the people they have sworn to serve and protect. The Republican Party, a party of law and order, must make clear in words and action that every human life matters."



"Anybody caught killing a policeman, policewoman, police officer — anybody killing a police officer — death penalty. It's going to happen, okay? ... We can't let this go" (Donald Trump, police labor union meeting in New Hampshire, Dec. 11, 2015).

'A well-formed Christian conscience does not permit one to vote for a political program or an individual law which contradicts the fundamental contents of faith and morals'

(*Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "The Participation of Catholics in Political Life"*).

VOTE

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