



DIOCESE OF DAVENPORT

MOVING FORWARD IN FAITH AND HOPE

DIOCESE OF DAVENPORT Political Responsibility Do's and Do Not's For Catholic Parishes, Schools and Other Entities of the Diocese

Introduction: Our world is increasingly focused on public policy and the people who make it. This is understandable due to the enormous impact state and national public policy can have on issues that directly affect the lives of people in our diocese. This focus is particularly evident during the political processes of campaigning and preparing for the November elections.

The following is a quick reminder of the activities that are encouraged (**Do's**) and those that are prohibited (**Do Not's**). It is essential that our Church is fair and that we follow the laws established for non-profit organizations. Our guidelines are based on guidance contained in *Faithful Citizenship* by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and state level guidance from the Iowa Catholic Conference (ICC). Direct questions to Kent Ferris, Director of Social Action for the Diocese of Davenport at 563-888-4211 or ferris@davenportdiocese.org.

Do's:

- Address the moral and human dimensions of public policy based on the Church's teaching.
- Share Catholic Social Teaching on topics such as human life, rural life, social justice and peace.
- Apply Catholic values to legislation and public issues, recognizing the limits that Catholic values and law impose on lobbying and advocacy and preserving our non-profit status.
- Register and vote after conscience formation on the issues and candidates.
- Arrange programs for parishioners to learn about moral issues affected by public policy.
- Strictly observe Church guidelines and IRS rules (see below) about political responsibility.
- Distribute only candidate questionnaires/information that have been approved by the Bishop.
- Refer any questions on what is allowed to the diocesan Director of Social Action.
- Promote the USCCB materials on *Faithful Citizenship: A Catholic Call to Political Responsibility*.

Do Not's:

- Do not engage in partisan politics at any level.
- Do not endorse, support or oppose any specific candidates or parties (directly or indirectly).
- Do not allow church facilities to be used for any electoral forums limited to just one candidate or political party, including Iowa party caucuses.
- Do not distribute or authorize the distribution of partisan campaign material on church property or under church auspices (this includes the grounds surrounding the church).
- Do not permit use of church property (including parking lots) for fundraisers, campaign events or the distribution of partisan materials.
- Do not allow only selected candidates to address a church-sponsored group.
- Do not conduct voter registration associated with one political party or candidate.
- Do not distribute any electoral materials not authorized by the Bishop.

References:

- For more information on this topic please visit our website at www.davenportdiocese.org/
- For USCCB information on *Faithful Citizenship* see <http://www.usccb.org/faithfulcitizenship/>
- For IRS guidelines visit www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=122887,00.html

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