

2019 PETITION ON THE FARMWORKER FAIR LABOR PRACTICES ACT

Our Diocese collected over 10,300 signatures in support of the Farmworkers Fair Labor Practices Act. In June, a bill passed which granted farmworkers the right to form a union, bargain collectively, receive overtime pay when working over 60 hours and to receive one optional day of rest per week. If they choose to work on their day off they are entitled to overtime or 1.5 times their regular wage rate.

Get up-to-date alerts on legislative issues!
Join the Catholic Action Network at www.nyscatholic.org

DIOCESAN PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE (DPPC)

Bishop Salvatore Matano appoints the Public Policy Committee to assist him in determining diocesan public policy priorities and to develop an implementation plan.

Chairperson: Rev. Daniel J. Condon	Chancellor, Diocese of Rochester
Committee Members: Jack Balinsky	Diocesan Director, Catholic Charities
Carolann Darling	Immaculate Conception, Ithaca
Mark Keller	St. Kateri, Irondequoit
Judith Kiehl	Pax Christi
Sister Janet Korn,	RSM Sisters of Mercy
Doug Mandelaro	Diocesan Communications Director
Ellen Durrigan Santora	St. Paul, Webster
Jessica Shanahan	Pregnancy Care Program
Mary M. Smith	St. Anne, Rochester
Sister Phyllis Tierney,	SSJ Sisters of St. Joseph
Deacon Nicholas Valvo	Sacred Heart/St. Anne, Auburn

Justice & Peace Ministry Staff of Catholic Charities (*denotes DPPC membership)

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Life Issues Coordinator: Shannon Kilbridge* 585-328-3228 ext 1218; Shannon.Kilbridge@dor.org

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ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER



2020 PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

In fidelity to our Catholic faith, we have the right and the responsibility to be involved in addressing public policy issues. Our freedom to elect leaders and to engage in political debate comes as a result of the great risks and sacrifices of those who came before us. With appreciation for the efforts of those who have preceded us and worked to preserve religious freedom and our human rights, we need to educate ourselves and make informed decisions about who will lead us. As the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops reminds us in their document, *Faithful Citizenship*: In light of Catholic teaching, the bishops vigorously repeat their call for a renewed politics that focuses on moral principles, the promotion of human life and dignity, and the pursuit of the common good. Political participation in this spirit reflects not only the social teaching of our Church but the best traditions of our nation. (Page 26, paragraphs 61 and 62).

I am grateful to our Public Policy Committee for providing guidance for appropriate ways parishes can be politically engaged and thereby nurture positive political engagements among the faithful.

In addition to laying the groundwork for political engagement, this year our Diocesan Public Policy Committee draws our attention to three additional urgent issues:

- The disturbing promotion of legislation in New York State that would wrongfully allow physicians, whose profession is committed to healing, to end the life of a terminally ill patient.
- The troubling problem of addiction in all its forms and the Church's role in supporting those who struggle with opioid, alcohol, gambling or other addictions and their families.
- The need for state funding to support essential infrastructure improvements in non-public schools.

Our own lives, our communities and the institutions we love are all impacted by the choices made by elected officials and legislative bodies. I encourage you to reflect on your Catholic faith and be educated about candidates and issues so that your informed conscience may guide you to make loving, life-giving choices in the political arena.

Rejoicing in God's gift of life, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

The Most Reverend Salvatore R. Matano
Bishop of Rochester



EDUCATION PRIORITIES

FAITHFUL CITIZENSHIP

The U.S. Bishops are in the process of updating their *Faithful Citizenship* document for the presidential election year. Political responsibility guidelines are already available for parish planning. Elections produce passionate responses, but it's essential that parishes remain nonpartisan. For detailed guidance on political activity, go to <http://www.usccb.org/about/general-counsel/political-activity-guidelines.cfm>

DO:

- Address the moral and human dimensions of public issues.
- Share Church teaching on human life, human rights, and justice and peace.
- Apply Catholic values to legislation and policy.
- Conduct a non-partisan voter registration drive on Church property.

DON'T:

- **Do Not** endorse or oppose candidates for political office.
- **Do Not** distribute partisan campaign literature under Church auspices.
- **Do Not** arrange for groups to work for a candidate for public office.
- **Do Not** invite only selected candidates to address your church-sponsored group.
- **Do Not** conduct voter registration slanted to one party

RESPONDING TO ADDICTION

As the terrible plague of opioid addiction continues, we are reminded that it and other addictions also bring tremendous harm to families and individuals in our nation.

Speaking to a conference on December 1, 2018, Pope Francis said that the plague of addictions will only be cured by a community effort: *"The Church, together with local, national and international institutions, and various educational agencies, is concretely engaged in every part of the world in combating the spread of addictions, devoting her resources to prevention, care, rehabilitation and reinsertion, in order to restore dignity to those who have lost it. Fighting addictions calls for a combined effort on the part of various local groups and agencies in enacting social programs promoting health care, family support and especially education...I readily support...a better coordination of policies aimed at halting the growth of drug abuse and addictions — isolated policies are of no use: it is a human problem, it is a social problem, everything must be interconnected — through the creation of networks of solidarity and closeness to those suffering from these pathologies."*

As the Church, we are called to minister with those suffering from addiction and accompany them through their recovery. We will be providing information and resources to parishes to help them find ways to support the individuals, families, and communities facing addiction.

FUNDING FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND CRITICAL CAPITAL NEEDS

Next to salary and benefits for personnel, the costs for energy and facility maintenance/repair are among the largest portions of school budgets. But unlike public school counterparts, religious and independent schools do not receive state building aid, nor do they have the authority to levy taxes or issue bonds to finance energy efficiency or other important capital projects. Although energy-saving improvements can pay for themselves over time, the up-front costs are often out of reach for cash-strapped schools. Maintaining Catholic Schools is not only good for the students and their families, it saves taxpayers the cost of educating those students.

We urge a \$200 million appropriation for critical capital projects at religious and independent schools and adoption of a combined energy efficiency grant and revolving loan program of \$75 million to provide seed money to initiate energy efficiency projects. Those school communities utilizing the loan portion of the fund would repay their initial grants with the savings they achieve in energy efficiency, thereby allowing the fund to "revolve" so as to continue to benefit others. This initiative is consistent with our advocacy for measures to promote environmental justice issues, as we are called to do in Pope Francis' Encyclical, *Laudato Si*.

DIOCESAN-WIDE PARISH-BASED ADVOCACY

PUBLIC POLICY WEEKEND

FEBRUARY 8 & 9, 2020

PHYSICIAN ASSISTED SUICIDE

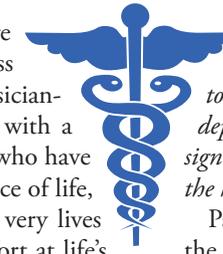
"When we subjectively determine when life begins and ends, when it is viable or not, or when it is too burdensome to endure, we begin a path toward self-destruction. Life is no longer precious, but just another commodity in the business of living. Relativism becomes the absolute, and even the value of life itself is questioned."

—Bishop Salvatore R. Matano, Statement Regarding Physician Assisted Suicide, January 2016

The New York State Legislature is under increasing pressure to pass legislation that would legalize physician-assisted suicide for patients diagnosed with a terminal illness. Medical professionals, who have chosen a vocation dedicated to the service of life, would assist in the termination of the very lives they have pledged to heal and to comfort at life's most critical moments.

As Catholics, we believe that the lives of people who are gravely ill or facing death are no less valuable than others. The New York State Catholic Conference (NYSCC) has joined with those in the medical community, disability rights community, and other faith-based groups to stand for the dignity of every human life and oppose this legislation that fails those at such a vulnerable stage of life.

We join the NYSCC in seeking "to maintain New York State's current prohibition on assisted suicide while ensuring increased support, resources, palliative and hospice care, appropriate pain relief and treatment for the terminally ill." The Bishops of New York go on to say that:



"Lifting New York's ban on assisted suicide would provide a deadly, unnecessary option to patients, many of whom legitimately fear pain, depression and abandonment. These persons can be significantly helped through pain relief, palliative care, the hospice environment and compassionate loving care."

Parishioners in the Diocese of Rochester will have the opportunity to add their voices by participating in Public Policy Weekend and making sure their legislators know they stand for the value of all human life at every stage, from the moment of conception until natural death.



ONGOING ISSUES

The Public Policy Committee continues to follow and support other important justice issues including the **Care for Creation, Education Tax Credit, war and non-violence, federal immigration reform, child care subsidies for low-income working families, and access to mental health care.**