



FLORIDA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS *2020 Candidate Questionnaire Project*

2020 U.S. CONGRESSIONAL QUESTIONS BACKGROUND

Do you support or oppose....

1. **ABORTION FUNDING BAN:** Maintaining the prohibition on the use of federal funds to pay for or provide insurance coverage for elective abortions?

For decades, the Hyde amendment in appropriation bills has prohibited taxpayer funding of abortion, except to save the life of a mother and in very limited circumstances.

2. **ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE:** Preserving the state option for Medicaid expansion, which would allow Florida to expand coverage in the future?

A provision in the Affordable Care Act allows states the option to expand Medicaid eligibility in order to extend health coverage to more low-income Americans. Under the provision, Medicaid eligibility is extended to adults up to age 64 with incomes up to 138 percent of the federal poverty level. As of January 2020, 34 states had fully adopted Medicaid expansion. Florida has not. Preserving the option would allow future participation.

3. **CONSUMER PROTECTION:** Capping the interest rate on consumer credit loans (e.g., payday loans and vehicle title loans) at 36%?

Many payday and car title lenders offer loans at 300% APR and higher. The Military Lending Act, approved in 2006, prohibits lenders from charging military servicemembers and their families more than 36% APR. The Veterans and Consumers Fair Credit Act would extend the Military Lending Act's interest rate cap to all Americans.

4. **DEATH PENALTY REPEAL:** Repealing the federal government's use of the death penalty?

The federal death penalty is frequently employed in cases where a conviction and death sentence could have been pursued in state courts. A number of federal cases resulting in death sentences were prosecuted in states that have abolished the death penalty. After a 17-year hiatus, three federal death row inmates were put to death in July 2020, and two additional inmates are scheduled to be executed in August 2020.

5. **ENVIRONMENT:** Investing federal funds in renewable energy innovation to mitigate harm to the natural environment?

The cost of renewable energy is now competitive with oil, coal and gas fired plants when that power is being generated by "new" power plants. Federal investment may help to supplant existing fossil fuel plants in favor of new renewable plants, reducing carbon emissions.

6. **GUN CONTROL:** Restricting access to firearms by requiring universal background checks?

While many factors are involved in gun violence, firearms easily find their way into the hands of those who use them to harm others. While respecting Second Amendment rights, universal background checks may help to limit firearm access to those who may be less prone to harm others.

7. **HUMAN SEXUALITY:** Maintaining currently protected classes of individuals without adding new ones based on “sexual orientation” and “gender identity”?

Traditionally protected classes are based on readily observable criteria and/or a long constitutional history (religion, race, sex, age, color, creed, disability). There have been and remain proposals to expand class protections to include “sexual orientation” and “gender identity” in federal anti-discrimination laws.

8. **IMMIGRATION:** Achieving comprehensive reforms that offer a path to citizenship for the undocumented who live in the U.S. and do not have a criminal record, expand family reunification and worker visas, secure our borders, and establish humane enforcement?

There have been proposals to amend our current immigration policies to ensure an adequate supply of labor, promote greater family stability, enhance public safety, recognize more clearly the right to migrate, and to enhance respect for human dignity.

9. **INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE:** Maintaining funding for U.S. international humanitarian and development assistance, which currently represents 1% of the federal budget?

Poverty-focused international development that seeks sustainable, humanitarian, long-term solutions in under-developed and poor countries represents approximately 1% of the federal budget.

10. **PARENTAL EMPOWERMENT:** Providing individuals and businesses federal tax credits for donations to state-based scholarship programs for K-12 education?

At present, 17 states, including Florida, have some form of tax credit scholarship program. Eligibility requirements vary and most programs are means tested. Funds are generated by donations freely made by individuals or businesses to scholarship granting organizations approved by respective states. Donors would receive federal tax credits.