



FLORIDA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS 2020 Candidate Questionnaire Project



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FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES - DISTRICT 32

DO YOU SUPPORT OR OPPOSE...

ABORTION LIMITS: Prohibiting abortion when a fetus has reached 20 weeks gestation and has the capacity to feel pain?

SUPPORT

Optional Comments: Twenty weeks is the equivalence of 5 months out of the nine-month term of a pregnancy. We support the 1973 United States Supreme Court's statement regarding such procedures are only "necessary, in appropriate medical judgement."; and we support the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) statement "that pregnant women may experience conditions such as "premature rupture of membranes and infection, preeclampsia, placental abruption, and placenta accreta" late in pregnancy that may endanger their lives. Women in these circumstances may risk extensive blood loss, stroke, and septic shock that could lead to maternal death. Politicians must never require a doctor to wait for a medical condition to worsen and become life-threatening before being able to provide evidence-based care to their patients, including an abortion."

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE: Increasing health coverage options for uninsured Floridians, especially the unemployed and the working poor?

SUPPORT

Optional Comments: A Sun-Sentinel article by Cindy Krischer Goodman read "Millions of Floridians Now Living Without Health Insurance" on May 23, 2019. Over a year later, in the face of COVID-19, these numbers have only increased the challenges of affordability and access to quality medical care. Our campaign supports Medicaid Expansion as the millions include children of economically disadvantaged households. Along with providing coverage for millions, a study "2019 Scorecard on State Health System Performance by the Commonwealth Fund project, the expansion would inject \$14.3 billion in new federal dollars into the State of Florida over five years. Financial gains off-sets of approximately \$119.3 million are possible in areas such as state funding for public health, corrections, behavioral health, and uncompensated care for uninsured residents of Florida.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING: Using all state housing trust funds as intended to address affordable housing needs in Florida?

SUPPORT

Optional Comments: In the latest report, the 2018 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress provided by The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development listed Florida as the 2nd largest state of homeless citizens (31,030). The appropriate use of Florida's housing trust funds for affordable housing needs along with an increase of Florida minimum wage from \$8.56 to \$15.00, would substantially reduce the homeless individuals and families.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE: Authorizing courts to impose a sentence less than the mandatory minimum term of imprisonment for nonviolent crimes?

SUPPORT

Optional Comments: Florida's prison system houses over 100,000 inmates. Fresh Take Florida published an article written by Dana Cassidy which stated, "A legislative study last year said Florida could save \$860 million over five years by reducing prison terms for non-violent offenders." We also support the Sun-Sentinel's statement, "Other states have found that allowing the release of certain non-violent inmates — and diverting others from entering the system — can be done without compromising public safety. Such policies also would save money." A step in this direction was the 2020 legislative Senate Bill 572, entitled "Release from Imprisonment." It died in the Senate's Appropriations Subcommittee on Criminal and Civil Justice, indefinitely postponed and withdrawn from consideration. We will continue the good fight next legislative session.

DEATH PENALTY REPEAL: Ending Florida's use of the death penalty while preserving the alternative of a life sentence without parole?

SUPPORT

Optional Comments: Florida is number one (1) in the nation with the number exonerations (29) due to evidence of wrongful conviction of inmate on Death Row as cited by Floridians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty's source Death Penalty Information Center, "Innocence and the Death Penalty."

END-OF-LIFE PROTECTION: Preserving Florida law that bans doctor-prescribed suicide?

SUPPORT

Optional Comments: In the 2020 legislative session, Senate Bill (SB) 1800 entitled "Death with Dignity" died in the Senate's Health Policy committee, indefinitely postponed and withdrawn from consideration. Personally, I have known of several individuals who were placed in hospice and they were able to make unbelievable medical improvements which resulted in removal from the program. Afterwards, they lived productive lives for many years.

FREEDOM TO SERVE: Allowing health care providers and workers the freedom to serve in accord with their conscience?

**NO
RESPONSE**

Optional Comments: As human beings, we are not perfect, and Jesus offered his healing to all regardless of their religious beliefs. I had personally witnessed teachers saying it was against their religious conscience, to teach Black and White children together and further saying, "your being here does not mean I have to teach you" and placed the Black students to the rear of the class with paper and crayons. I found forgiveness; I hope that those teachers found the truth of their truth as spoken about by His Holiness Pope Paul VI's, in the Declaration on Religious Freedom, "In the exercise of their rights, individual men and social groups are bound by the moral law to have respect both for the rights of others and for their own duties toward others and for the common welfare of all. Men are to deal with their fellows in justice and civility." Being a Christian, I take no side on this question of one's religious beliefs and the application within their profession.

PARENTAL EMPOWERMENT: Eliminating the requirement to attend public school the year prior to receiving a state scholarship for K-12 non-public schools?

**NO
RESPONSE**

Optional Comments: As a former educator, my support is equal regarding this issue. The private instructional activities provided by the Catholic church is the premier role model for non-public education. Unfortunately, all non-public education institutions do not follow the same high standards. The necessity of the eligibility requirement protects the students with disabilities and their parents' rights of access to an education, which emphasized and addressed the appropriate establishment of their unique needs. The public education system is mandated to follow Public Law 94-142 by providing the necessary resource for implementation with an undue burden upon the parents. The requirement of "a prior year," some may find essential due to the resources invested in the interest of providing an effective 504 accommodation plan or Individualized Education Plan (IEP). I support flexibility with this timeline as a change maybe necessary before the end of the requirement period.

PROTECTING WORKERS: Requiring drinking water, shade, and annual heat illness training be provided for farmworkers and other outdoor workers?

SUPPORT

Optional Comments: The "fundamental principles and rights at work," as the International Labor Organization has identified workplace rights, should not belong only to indoor employment. We support the intent of the 2020 Legislative session's Senate Bill (SB) 882 and House Bill (HB) 513, identical bills entitled "Heat Illness Prevention." SB 882 died in the Senate's Agriculture Committee, and HB 513 died in the House Workforce Development and Tourism Subcommittee, both indefinitely postponed and withdrawn from consideration. We look forward to the next legislative session to champion these principles and workplace rights into law.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM: Respecting the autonomy of non-public schools to maintain policies that distinguish dress codes and other aspects of student life on the biological basis of sex?

**NO
RESPONSE**

Optional Comments: Being a Christian is a proud statement I am free to say and write openly. I reserve no response as this question relates to one's religious beliefs and the application within the educational settings provided for in some cases with public funding, and this question is personal. It was not that long ago that women were prohibited from wearing pants based on religious reasoning. Related to this question, I found comfort in His Holiness Pope Paul VI's, December 7, 1965, in the "Declaration on Religious Freedom," statement "However, in spreading religious faith and in introducing religious practices everyone ought at all times to refrain from any manner of action which might seem to carry a hint of coercion or of a kind of persuasion that would be dishonorable or unworthy, especially when dealing with poor or uneducated people. Such a manner of action would have to be considered an abuse of one's right and a violation of the right of others."