



DIOCESE OF DAVENPORT

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

Introduction: It is hard to ignore public policy and the people who make it as this dominates our news and social media. The Holy Father, the Church call us to apply our faith to the issues of today, and to take action in letting our legislators know where we stand. The Church sees issues, not political parties or individuals involved in politics. The decisions made in the Statehouse and in the Congress affect our lives and the lives of others. On the federal level, our Congress sets the face of America seen by the world through its impact on lives of others living in other nations. As Catholics, we learn about issues and respond within a frame work that reflects us as people of faith.

The following is a quick reminder of the activities that are encouraged (**Do's**) and those that we cannot do (**Do Not's**). The Church must be fair, and it must comply with the laws concerning non-profit organizations. Recognizing that within our faith, people may have different approaches to issues, we base our guidelines on *Faithful Citizenship*, a statement of the Catholic approach to political issues by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and for state issues, 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* (see below).

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 <https://www.davenportdiocese.org/faithful-citizenship>
- For USCCB information on *Faithful Citizenship* see <http://www.usccb.org/faithfulcitizenship/>
- For IRS guidelines visit <https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/charitable-organizations/exemption-requirements-section-501c3-organizations>