



# DIOCESE OF DAVENPORT

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

We are increasingly focused on public policy and the people who make it due to the enormous impact state and national public policy can have on issues that directly affect the lives of people in our diocese. As individual Catholics, we are encouraged to bring our values into this arena through participation in the political process. As parishes or other elements of the Church there are limitations of faith and law that we must observe. The Church is concerned that issues be addressed as expressions of Scripture and Catholic social teaching, and does not take positions on political parties, individual office holders or candidates.

The following is a quick reminder of the activities that are encouraged (Do's) and those that are prohibited (Do Not's) for our parishes, schools and other elements of the Church. 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](mailto: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.
- Recognize the limits that Catholic values and law impose on lobbying and advocacy and preserving our non-profit status.
- Encourage registration and voting and participation in the political process by individual parishioners.
- Arrange programs for parishioners to learn about moral issues affected by public policy.
- Distribute only candidate questionnaires/information that have been approved by the Bishop.
- Refer any questions on what is allowable 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 permit parish engagement in partisan politics at any level.
- Do not, as a parish or other element of the Church 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/faithful-citizenship](http://www.davenportdiocese.org/faithful-citizenship). For USCCB information on Faithful Citizenship see <http://www.usccb.org/faithfulcitizenship/>. For IRS guidelines visit <https://www.stayexempt.irs.gov/home/resource-library/virtual-small-mid-size-tax-exempt-organization-workshop>