



Virtuous Vote

A Catholic Perspective on
Today's Public Policy Issues

“In the Catholic tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation.”
- *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, 13

Since participation in political life is a moral obligation, Catholics need to form their conscience with the mind and heart of the Church on issues of consequence. The Virtuous Vote series outlines and examines eight important moral and political issues.

Religious Freedom

Catholics in America have long enjoyed the fact that in the Bill of Rights, religious liberty, with its rights of conscience, is the first freedom that is protected in our Constitution. Yet today, religious freedom, even in the United States, is consistently being challenged, particularly in the government through federal agencies. The government under progressive administrations have attacked rights of conscience for healthcare workers, threatened faith-based adoption agencies, and attempted to force Catholics to go along with transgender ideology. As the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has noted:

The vast majority of threats to religious liberty at the federal level last year came in the form of proposed regulations by federal agencies. These heavily focused on imposing requirements regarding abortion, “sexual orientation,” and “gender identity.” <https://www.usccb.org/committees/religious-liberty/2024-annual-report>

Again, we can see this stress and hostility towards our Catholic faith from censorship from big tech companies, discrimination against Catholic appointees in government, cases against faith-based adoption agencies, the accreditation of religious educational institutions, the grants and contracts of faith-based charities and small businesses, and the licensing of religious professions. Our cherished religious liberties are now at stake by our political choices. As the USCCB has written:

In the United States, religious freedom generally enjoys strong protection in our law and culture, but those protections are now in doubt. For example, the longstanding tax exemption of the Church has been explicitly called into question at the highest levels of government, precisely because of her teachings on marriage. Catholics have a particular duty to make sure that protections like these do not weaken but instead grow in strength. This is not only to secure the just freedom of the Church and the faithful here but also to offer hope and an encouraging witness to those who suffer direct and even violent religious persecution in countries where the protection is far weaker. (The Challenge of Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, 30)

It is imperative then as Catholics that we defend religious liberty and the rights of conscience in our political choices. For religious liberty has its foundation in the dignity of the human person. As Pope Paul VI wrote:

The protection and promotion of the inviolable rights of man ranks among the essential duties of government. Therefore government is to assume the safeguard of the religious freedom of all

its citizens, in an effective manner, by just laws and by other appropriate means. (Pope Paul VI, *Dignitatis Humanae*, 6, 1965)

In summation, it is the duty of every Catholic to fight for religious liberty to ensure not only the right of conscience in the workplace but also that families, Churches, and peoples of all faiths can work in accordance with their religious beliefs while they care for the common good, the poor and vulnerable, and God's creation.

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About Center for Christian Virtue

Center for Christian Virtue (CCV) is Ohio's largest Christian public policy organization. We seek the good of our neighbors by advocating for public policy that reflects the truth of the Gospel. Learn more at CCV.org.

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