Florida Catholic Conference
The nonpartisan public policy voice of the Catholic Bishops of Florida
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Presidential Preference Primary Election

January 31, 2012

Discerning Your Vote

The right to vote carries with it a responsibility to study and know the candidates. As citizens of faith, we are led to question, according to our foundational beliefs, how each candidate if elected will address our nation's issues. There are moral and ethical dimensions to every public policy. However, issues carry different moral weight and urgency. Some involve matters of intrinsic evil that can never be supported, such as the direct and intentional destruction of innocent human life. Others involve an obligation to seek the common good. The following questions are offered to assist in discerning where the Presidential Primary candidates stand on issues concerning the protection of human life and the promotion of a just society.

How will each candidate:

- Pursue the preeminent requirement to protect the weakest in our midst - innocent unborn children - by restricting and bringing to an end the destruction of unborn children through abortion?
- Provide full respect for religious groups and their right to address social needs in accord with their basic moral convictions?
- Keep our nation from turning to violence to address fundamental problems, such as euthanasia and assisted suicide to deal with the burdens of illness and disability, the destruction of human embryos in the name of research, and the use of the death penalty to combat crime?
- Protect marriage as a union between one man and one woman?
- Achieve comprehensive immigration reform that humanely secures our borders, treats immigrant workers fairly, fosters family reunification, offers an earned path to citizenship, respects the rule of law, and addresses the factors that compel people to leave their own countries?
- Assist families in ensuring access to and choice in education?
- Ensure health care for the growing number of people without it, while respecting human life, human dignity, and religious freedom in our health care system?
- Encourage the community and government to work together to overcome poverty at home and abroad, eradicate racism, pursue the common good, and care for creation?
- Establish and comply with moral limits on the use of military force - examining for what purposes it may be used, under what authority, and at what human cost?

This information, based on the document Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility from the Catholic Bishops of the United States with Introductory Note, 2011, is provided for educational purposes only and does not endorse or oppose any candidate or political party.