

CATHOLIC ADVOCACY

A PARISH STRATEGY FOR LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

Advocacy Handbook
June 24, 2013

Department for Human Life and Dignity
Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh



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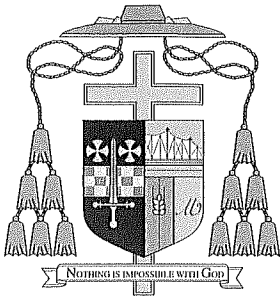


“We have the right to have an impact on our society for good. We have a right to express our beliefs publicly, to judge where society may fall short in matters of justice and the common good, and to try to convince hearts and minds. People of faith offer a necessary perspective to the public square, often offering a voice for those who have no one to speak out for them.”

Bishop David A. Zubik, June 2013

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Office of the Bishop

June 24, 2013

Solemnity of the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist

My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

On this Solemnity of the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist, I write as a reminder of our call to be advocates in the cause of justice. Our Catholic Church has long recognized that Christians have a responsibility to participate in public discourse and especially to be a voice for those who have no voice.

We are called to speak up on behalf of our sisters and brothers who in any way are suffering or afflicted; we are called to speak up in defense of life, protecting every human being at every stage of development; we are called to promote marriage as a lifelong union between one man and one woman; we are called to global solidarity; we are called to foster religious freedom, both at home and abroad.

To love someone is to desire that person's good and to take effective steps to secure what is to their benefit. It is love that requires us to become advocates. It is love for God and love for our dear neighbor that motivates us to work for policies that protect human life and dignity.

The enclosed *A Parish Strategy for Legislative Advocacy* is a tool for priests, deacons, parish leaders and all lay faithful to seek to be faithful citizens inspired to love. Following the example of Saint John the Baptist, whose voice cried out in the wilderness, may our voices advance charity, justice and peace.

Grateful for our belief that "Nothing is Impossible with God," I am

Your brother in Christ,

+ *David A. Zubik*

Most Reverend David A. Zubik
Bishop of Pittsburgh

DAZ:lw

Enclosure

cc: Mrs. Helene E. Paharik

Part I

Understanding Our Call and Commitment

“We have the right to have an impact on our society for good. We have a right to express our beliefs publicly, to judge where society may fall short in matters of justice and the common good, and to try to convince hearts and minds. People of faith offer a necessary perspective to the public square, often offering a voice for those who have no one to speak out for them.”

[Bishop David A. Zubik, June 2013]

Our Call to Be Advocates

The Catholic Church has long recognized that Christians “play their full role as citizens.” In a 2002 Doctrinal Note, the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith emphasized that in fulfilling their civic duties, the lay faithful, guided by a Christian conscience, should infuse the temporal order with Christian values, while respecting the distinct order of the state and cooperating with other citizens.

“It is commendable that in today’s democratic societies, in a climate of true freedom, everyone is made a participant in directing the body politic. Such societies call for new and fuller forms of participation in public life by Christian and non-Christian citizens alike. Indeed, all can contribute, by voting in elections for lawmakers and government officials, and in other ways as well, to the development of political solutions and legislative choices which, in their opinion, will benefit the common good. The life of a democracy could not be productive without the active, responsible and generous involvement of everyone, albeit in a diversity and complementarity of forms, levels, tasks, and responsibilities.”

[Doctrinal Note on the Participation of Catholics in Political Life, no. 1]

“In the Catholic Tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation. This obligation is rooted in our baptismal commitment to follow Christ and to bear Christian witness in all we do.”

*[United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, **Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship**, Nov. 2007]*

"To love someone is to desire that person's good and to take effective steps to secure it. Besides the good of the individual, there is a good that is linked to living in society: the common good. It is the good of “all of us,” made up of individuals, families and intermediate groups who together constitute society. It is a good that is sought not for its own sake, but for the people who belong to

the social community and who can only really and effectively pursue their good within it. To desire the common good and strive towards it is a requirement of justice and charity."

*[Pope Benedict XVI, **Caritas in Veritate**, no. 7]*

"The political community pursues the common good when it seeks to create a human environment that offers citizens the possibility of truly exercising their human rights and of fulfilling completely their corresponding duties."

[Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, no. 389]

"Each human community possesses a common good which permits it to be recognized as such; it is in the political community that its most complete realization is found. It is the role of the state to defend and promote the common good of civil society, its citizens, and intermediate bodies."

[Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1910]

"Human interdependence is increasing and gradually spreading throughout the world. The unity of the human family, embracing people who enjoy equal natural dignity, implies a universal common good. This good calls for an organization of the community of nations able to "provide for the different needs of men; this will involve the sphere of social life to which belong questions of food, hygiene, education, . . . and certain situations arising here and there, as for example . . . alleviating the miseries of refugees dispersed throughout the world, and assisting migrants and their families."

[Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1911]

"At the center of these truths is respect for the dignity of every person. This is the core of Catholic moral and social teaching. Because we are people of both faith and reason, it is appropriate and necessary for us to bring this essential truth about human life and dignity to the public square. We are called to practice Christ's commandment to "love one another" (Jn. 13:34). We are also called to promote the well-being of all, to share our blessings with those most in need, to defend marriage, and to protect the lives and dignity of all, especially the weak, the vulnerable, the voiceless."

*[United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, **Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship**]*

"Man cannot be sundered from God, nor politics from morality."

*[Pope John Paul II, **Proclaiming Saint Thomas More the Patron of Statesmen and Politicians**]*

" ... The lay faithful are never to relinquish their participation in 'public life', that is, in the many different economic, social, legislative, administrative and cultural

areas, which are intended to promote organically and institutionally the common good. This would include the promotion and defense of goods such as public order and peace, freedom and equality, respect for human life and for the environment, justice and solidarity."

*[United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, **Doctrinal Note on the Participation of Catholics in Political Life**]*

Our Commitment to Life

"Human life is sacred. The dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society."

[United States Conference of Catholic Bishops]

"Since every person is created in the image of God and redeemed by Jesus Christ, each one is invaluable and worthy of respect, a fellow member of the human family. From the moment of conception to natural death, each human being -- from the tiniest embryo to the frailest elderly person, from the recent immigrant to the loneliest homeless person to the convicted prisoner -- has an inherent God-given dignity and a right to life consistent with that dignity. Church teaching tells us that we must integrate this belief in the dignity of all human life into our society on behalf of the common good.

*[United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, **Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship**, no. 44]*

Abortion

"Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. From the first moment of existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person -- among which is the inviolable right of every innocent being to life."

[Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2270]

"Direct attacks on innocent persons are never morally acceptable, at any stage or in any condition. In our society, human life is especially under direct attack from abortion."

*[United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, **Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship**, no. 44]*

Euthanasia - Assisted Suicide

"Intentional euthanasia, whatever its forms or motives, is murder. It is gravely contrary to the dignity of the human person and to the respect due to the living God, his Creator."

[Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2324]

"As Catholic leaders and moral teachers, we believe that life is the most basic gift of a loving God -- a gift over which we have stewardship but not absolute dominion. Our tradition, declaring a moral obligation to care for our own life and health and to seek such care from others, recognizes that we are not morally obligated to use all available medical procedures in every set of circumstances. But that tradition clearly and strongly affirms that as a responsible steward of life one must never directly intend to cause one's own death, or the death of an innocent victim, by action or omission. As the Second Vatican Council declared, "euthanasia and willful suicide" are "offenses against life itself" which "poison civilization"; they "debase the perpetrators more than the victims and militate against the honor of the creator."

[United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Administrative Committee, Statement on Euthanasia, 1991]

Embryonic Stem Cell Research

Because every human life is sacred, our Church embraces scientific and medical advances that save lives, cure diseases, and improve health, as long as those advances are not made by exploiting, harming, or killing another member of our human family.

"Because it should be treated as a person from conception, the embryo must be defended in its integrity, cared for, and healed like every other human being."

[Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2323]

Death Penalty

"Assuming that the guilty party's identity and responsibility have been fully determined, the traditional teaching of the Church does not exclude recourse to the death penalty, if this is the only possible way of effectively defending human lives against the unjust aggressor. If, however, non-lethal means are sufficient to defend and protect people's safety from the aggressor, authority will limit itself to such means, as these are more in keeping with the concrete conditions of the common good and more in conformity with the dignity of the human person. Today, in fact, as a consequence of the possibilities which the state has for effectively preventing crime, by rendering one who has committed an offense

incapable of doing harm – without definitely taking away from him the possibility of redeeming himself – the cases in which the execution of the offender is an absolute necessity are very rare, if not practically nonexistent."

[Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2267]

"In Catholic teaching the state has the recourse to impose the death penalty upon criminals convicted of heinous crimes if this ultimate sanction is the only available means to protect society from a grave threat to human life. However, this right should not be exercised when other ways are available to punish criminals and to protect society that are more respectful of human life."

[United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, A Culture of Life and the Penalty of Death, Nov. 2005]

Our Commitment to Religious Liberty

Religious freedom has profound implications for the common good of our nation and world. It is a freedom endowed to every person by God.

"Freedom is exercised in relationships between human beings. Every human person, created in the image of God, has the natural right to be recognized as a free and responsible being. All owe to each other this duty of respect. The *right to the exercise of freedom*, especially in moral and religious matters, is an inalienable requirement of the dignity of the human person. This right must be recognized and protected by civil authority within the limits of the common good and public order."

[Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1738]

"A sense of the dignity of the human person has been impressing itself more and more deeply on the consciousness of contemporary man, and the demand is increasingly made that men should act on their own judgment, enjoying and making use of a responsible freedom, not driven by coercion but motivated by a sense of duty. The demand is likewise made that constitutional limits should be set to the powers of government, in order that there may be no encroachment on the rightful freedom of the person and of associations. This demand for freedom in human society chiefly regards the quest for the values proper to the human spirit. It regards, in the first place, the free exercise of religion in society."

[Declaration on Religious Freedom, Dignitatis Humanae, On the Right of the Person and of Communities to Social and Civil Freedom in Matters Religious, Pope Paul VI, 1965]

“This Vatican Council declares that the human person has a right to religious freedom. This freedom means that all men are to be immune from coercion on the part of individuals or of social groups and of any human power, in such wise that no one is to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his own beliefs, whether privately or publicly, whether alone or in association with others, within due limits. The council further declares that the right to religious freedom has its foundation in the very dignity of the human person as this dignity is known through the revealed word of God and by reason itself. This right of the human person to religious freedom is to be recognized in the constitutional law whereby society is governed and thus it is to become a civil right.”

[Declaration on Religious Freedom, Dignitatis Humanae, On the Right of the Person and of Communities to Social and Civil Freedom in Matters Religious, Pope Paul VI, 1965]

“Religious freedom is at the origin of moral freedom.” The Pope taught it should be understood “not merely as immunity from coercion, but even more fundamentally as an ability to order one’s own choices in accordance with truth... When religious freedom is acknowledged, the dignity of the human person is respected at its root, and the ethos and institutions of peoples are strengthened. On the other hand, whenever religious freedom is denied, and attempts are made to hinder people from professing their religion or faith and living accordingly, human dignity is offended, with a resulting threat to justice and peace....”

[Pope Benedict XVI, World Day of Peace, 2011]

Our Commitment to Social Justice

"The Church makes a moral judgment about economic and social matters, when the fundamental rights of the person or the salvation of souls requires it. In the moral order she bears a mission distinct from that of political authorities: the Church is concerned with the temporal aspects of the common good because they are ordered to the sovereign Good, our ultimate end. She strives to inspire right attitudes with respect to earthly goods and in socio-economic relationships."

[Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2420]

"The State cannot limit itself to "favoring one portion of the citizens", namely the rich and prosperous, nor can it "neglect the other", which clearly represents the majority of society. Otherwise, there would be a violation of that law of justice which ordains that every person should receive his due. When there is question of defending the rights of individuals, the defenseless and the poor have a claim to special consideration. The richer class has many ways of shielding itself, and

stands less in need of help from the State; whereas the mass of the poor have no resources of their own to fall back on, and must chiefly depend on the assistance of the State. It is for this reason that wage-earners, since they mostly belong to the latter class, should be specially cared for and protected by the Government."
[Pope John Paul II, Centesimus Annus, no. 10]

"Here again the principle of subsidiarity must be respected: a community of a higher order should not interfere in the internal life of a community of a lower order, depriving the latter of its functions, but rather should support it in case of need and help to coordinate its activity with the activities of the rest of society, always with a view to the common good."
[Pope John Paul II, Centesimus Annus, no. 48]

Poverty and Economic Justice

"In economic matters, respect for human dignity requires the practice of the virtue of temperance, so as to moderate attachment to this world's goods; the practice of the virtue of justice, to preserve our neighbor's rights and render him what is his due; and the practice of solidarity, in accordance with the golden rule and in keeping with the generosity of the Lord, who 'though he was rich, yet for your sake ... became poor so that by his poverty, you might become rich.'"
[Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2407]

"All people have the right to economic initiative, to productive work, to just wages and benefits, to decent working conditions as well as to organize and join unions or other associations."
[United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Economic Justice for All]

"All people, to the extent they are able, have a corresponding duty to work, a responsibility to provide for the needs of their families and an obligation to contribute to the broader society."
[United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Economic Justice for All]

"Society has a moral obligation, including governmental action where necessary, to assure opportunity, meet basic human needs, and pursue justice in economic life."
[United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Economic Justice for All]

Immigration, Migration and Refugees

"All, therefore, belong to one family, migrants and the local populations that welcome them, and all have the same right to enjoy the goods of the earth whose destination is universal, as the social doctrine of the Church teaches. It is here that solidarity and sharing are founded."

[Pope Benedict XVI, World Day of Migrants and Refugees, 2010]

"The more prosperous nations are obliged, to the extent they are able, to welcome the foreigner in search of the security and the means of livelihood which he cannot find in his country of origin. Public authorities should see to it that the natural right is respected that places a guest under the protection of those who receive him. Political authorities, for the sake of the common good for which they are responsible, may make the exercise of the right to immigrate subject to various juridical conditions, especially with regard to the immigrants' duties toward their country of adoption. Immigrants are obliged to respect with gratitude the material and spiritual heritage of the country that receives them, to obey its laws and to assist in carrying civic burdens."

[Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2241]

Three Basic Principles of Catholic Social Teaching on Immigration from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops:

First Principle: People have the right to migrate to sustain their lives and the lives of their families.

Second Principle: A country has the right to regulate its borders and to control immigration.

Third Principle: A country must regulate its borders with justice and mercy.

Health Care

"Life and physical health are precious gifts entrusted to us by God. We must take reasonable care of them, taking into account the needs of others and the common good. Concern for the health of its citizens requires that society help in the attainment of living-conditions that allow them to grow and reach maturity: food and clothing, housing, health care, basic education, employment, and social assistance."

[Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2288]

"The demands of the common good are dependent on the social conditions of each historical period and are strictly connected to respect for and the integral promotion of the person and his fundamental rights. These demands concern above all the commitment to peace, the organization of the State's powers, a

sound juridical system, the protection of the environment, and the provision of essential services to all, some of which are at the same time human rights: food, housing, work, education and access to culture, transportation, basic health care, the freedom of communication and expression, and the protection of religious freedom."

*[Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, **Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church**, no. 166]*

Environmental Stewardship

"In his desire to have and to enjoy rather than to be and to grow, man consumes the resources of the earth and his own life in an excessive and disordered way. At the root of the senseless destruction of the natural environment lies an anthropological error ... Man, who discovers his capacity to transform and in a certain sense create the world through his own work, forgets that this is always based on God's prior and original gift of the things that are. Man thinks that he can make arbitrary use of the earth, subjecting it without restraint to his will, as though it did not have its own requisites and a prior God-given purpose, which man can indeed develop but must not betray."

*[Pope John Paul II, **Centesimus Annus**, no. 37]*

"It is the task of the State to provide for the defense and preservation of common goods such as the natural and human environments, which cannot be safeguarded simply by market forces. Just as in the time of primitive capitalism the State had the duty of defending the basic rights of workers, so now, with the new capitalism, the State and all of society have the duty of defending those collective goods which, among others, constitute the essential framework for the legitimate pursuit of personal goals on the part of each individual."

*[Pope John Paul II, **Centesimus Annus**, no. 37]*

"The environment must be seen as God's gift to all people, and the use we make of it entails a shared responsibility for all humanity, especially the poor and future generations."

*[Pope Benedict XVI, **World Day of Prayer, 2010]***

"Can we remain indifferent before the problems associated with such realities as climate change, desertification, the deterioration and loss of productivity in vast agricultural areas, the pollution of rivers and aquifers, the loss of biodiversity, the increase of natural catastrophes and the deforestation of equatorial and tropical regions? Can we disregard the growing phenomenon of "environmental refugees", people who are forced by the degradation of their natural habitat to forsake it – and often their possessions as well – in order to face the dangers and uncertainties of forced displacement? Can we remain impassive in the face of

actual and potential conflicts involving access to natural resources? All these are issues with a profound impact on the exercise of human rights, such as the right to life, food, health and development."

[Pope Benedict XVI, World Day of Prayer, 2010]

"Sad to say, it is all too evident that large numbers of people in different countries and areas of our planet are experiencing increased hardship because of the negligence or refusal of many others to exercise responsible stewardship over the environment. The Second Vatican Ecumenical Council reminded us that 'God has destined the earth and everything it contains for all peoples and nations.'"

[Pope Benedict XVI, World Day of Prayer, 2010]

Our Commitment to Family and Education Issues

Marriage

"The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life, is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring; this covenant between baptized persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament."

[Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1601]

"... God himself is the author of marriage. The vocation to marriage is written in the very nature of man and woman as they came from the hand of the Creator. Marriage is not a purely human institution despite the many variations it may have undergone through the centuries in different cultures, social structures, and spiritual attitudes. These differences should not cause us to forget its common and permanent characteristics. Although the dignity of this institution is not transparent everywhere with the same clarity, some sense of the greatness of the matrimonial union exists in all cultures. The well-being of the individual person and of both human and Christian society is closely bound up with the healthy state of conjugal and family life."

[Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1603]

"For several reasons a same-sex union contradicts the nature of marriage: It is not based on the natural complementarity of male and female; it cannot cooperate with God to create new life; and the natural purpose of sexual union cannot be achieved by a same-sex union. Persons in same-sex unions cannot enter into a true conjugal union. Therefore, it is wrong to equate their relationship to a marriage.

“Across times, cultures, and very different religious beliefs, marriage is the foundation of the family. The family, in turn, is the basic unit of society. Thus, marriage is a personal relationship with public significance. Marriage is the fundamental pattern for male-female relationships. It contributes to society because it models the way in which women and men live interdependently and commit, for the whole of life, to seek the good of each other.

“The marital union also provides the best conditions for raising children: namely, the stable, loving relationship of a mother and father present only in marriage. The state rightly recognizes this relationship as a public institution in its laws because the relationship makes a unique and essential contribution to the common good.

“Laws play an educational role insofar as they shape patterns of thought and behavior, particularly about what is socially permissible and acceptable. In effect, giving same-sex unions the legal status of marriage would grant official public approval to homosexual activity and would treat it as if it were morally neutral.

“When marriage is redefined so as to make other relationships equivalent to it, the institution of marriage is devalued and further weakened. The weakening of this basic institution at all levels and by various forces has already exacted too high a social cost.”

*[United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, **Between Man And Woman: Questions And Answers About Marriage And Same-Sex Unions**]*

"While human persons are more than biological organisms, the roots of marriage can be seen in the biological fact that a man and a woman can come together as male and female in a union that has the potential for bringing forth another human person. This kind of union fills the need for the continuation of the human race. Since human beings exist at more than a biological level, however, this union has further personal and spiritual dimensions. Marriage does not exist solely for the reproduction of another member of the species, but for the creation of a communion of persons.

“To form a communion of persons is the vocation of everyone. As Pope John Paul II teaches, all human persons are created in the image of God, who is a communion of love of three persons, and thus all are called to live in a communion of self-giving love: to say that man is created in the image and likeness of God means that man is called to exist for others, to become a gift.”

*[**Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan**, A Pastoral Letter of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops]*

The Family

"The political community has a duty to honor the family, to assist it, and to ensure especially:

- the freedom to establish a family, have children, and bring them up in keeping with the family's own moral and religious convictions;
- the protection of the stability of the marriage bond and the institution of the family;
- the freedom to profess one's faith, to hand it on, and raise one's children in it, with the necessary means and institutions;
- the right to private property, to free enterprise, to obtain work and housing, and the right to emigrate;
- in keeping with the country's institutions, the right to medical care, assistance for the aged, and family benefits;
- the protection of security and health, especially with respect to dangers like drugs, pornography, alcoholism, etc.;
- the freedom to form associations with other families and so to have representation before civil authority."

[Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2211]

Children and Education

"The fruitfulness of conjugal love extends to the fruits of the moral, spiritual, and supernatural life that parents hand on to their children by education. Parents are the principal and first educators of their children. In this sense the fundamental task of marriage and family is to be at the service of life."

[Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1653]

"The right and duty of parents to educate their children is essential, since it is connected with the transmission of human life; it is original and primary with regard to the educational role of others, on account of the uniqueness of the loving relationship between parents and children; and it is irreplaceable and inalienable, and therefore incapable of being entirely delegated to others or usurped by others. Parents have the duty and right to impart a religious education and moral formation to their children, a right the State cannot annul but which it must respect and promote. This is a primary right that the family may not neglect or delegate."

[Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, no. 239]

Our Commitment to Global Solidarity

"Solidarity is action on behalf of the one human family, calling us to help overcome the divisions in our world. Solidarity binds the rich to the poor. It makes the free zealous for the cause of the oppressed. It drives the comfortable and secure to take risks for the victims of tyranny and war. It calls those who are strong to care for those who are weak and vulnerable across the spectrum of human life. It opens homes and hearts to those in flight from terror and to migrants whose daily toil supports affluent lifestyles."

Cain's question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Gn. 4:9), has global implications and is a special challenge for our time, touching not one brother but all our sisters and brothers. Are we responsible for the fate of the world's poor? Do we have duties to suffering people in far-off places? Must we respond to the needs of suffering refugees in distant nations? Are we keepers of the creation for future generations?

For the followers of Jesus, the answer is yes. Indeed, we are our brothers' and sisters' keepers. As members of God's one human family, we acknowledge our duties to people in far-off places. We accept God's charge to care for all human life and for all creation.

We have heard the Lord's command, "Love your neighbor as yourself." In our linked and limited world, loving our neighbor has global implications. In faith, we know our neighbors live in Rwanda and Sudan, in East Timor and China, in Bosnia and Central America, as well as across our country and next door. Baptism, confirmation, and continuing participation in the body of Christ call us to action for "the least among us" without regard for boundaries or borders.

Duties of solidarity and the sacrifices they entail fall not just on individuals but on groups and nations as well."

*[United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, **Called to Global Solidarity**, 1997]*

"Sacred Scripture continually speaks to us of an active commitment to our neighbor and demands of us a shared responsibility for all of humanity. This duty is not limited to one's own family, nation or state, but extends progressively to all . . . so no one can consider himself extraneous or indifferent to the lot of another member of the human family"

*[Pope John Paul II, **Centesimus Annus**, no. 51]*

"The Christian vocation to development helps to promote the advancement of all men and of the whole man. As Paul VI wrote: "What we hold important is man, each man and each group of men, and we even include the whole of

humanity". In promoting development, the Christian faith does not rely on privilege or positions of power, nor even on the merits of Christians but only on Christ, to whom every authentic vocation to integral human development must be directed. The Gospel is fundamental for development, because in the Gospel, Christ, "in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and of his love, fully reveals humanity to itself". Taught by her Lord, the Church examines the signs of the times and interprets them, offering the world "what she possesses as her characteristic attribute: a global vision of man and of the human race. Precisely because God gives a resounding "yes" to man, man cannot fail to open himself to the divine vocation to pursue his own development. The truth of development consists in its completeness: if it does not involve the whole man and every man, it is not true development."

*[Pope Benedict XVI, **Caritas en Veritate**, no. 18]*

"Love in truth — caritas in veritate — is a great challenge for the Church in a world that is becoming progressively and pervasively globalized. The risk for our time is that the de facto interdependence of people and nations is not matched by ethical interaction of consciences and minds that would give rise to truly human development. Only in charity, illumined by the light of reason and faith, is it possible to pursue development goals that possess a more humane and humanizing value. The sharing of goods and resources, from which authentic development proceeds, is not guaranteed by merely technical progress and relationships of utility, but by the potential of love that overcomes evil with good (cf. Rom 12:21), opening up the path towards reciprocity of consciences and liberties."

*[Pope Benedict XVI, **Caritas en Veritate**, no. 9]*

How Advocacy Can Have an Impact

Effective advocacy can come in many forms. As an advocate, you make an impact in the following ways:

- **You Educate.** As an advocate, you can contribute to changing how the public and elected officials understand an issue and the challenges facing the most vulnerable in your community and our world. Some legislators will have in-depth knowledge about our issues. Others will know very little about them. Legislators are constantly bombarded with information and requests from various interests groups and constituents. Your job is to keep our issues front and center among competing priorities, as well as shape how the public perceives these issues and their importance for the common good.

- **You Witness.** Your experience in your parish and your larger community gives you expertise as a real-life witness. You can inform public opinion using the stories you gather about people impacted by public policy on life, the family, social justice, liberty and school choice.
- **You Enlist Allies.** As you educate the public and elected officials, you enlist individuals and organizations to support our cause and join with local and national Catholic advocacy organizations to create a movement for change.
- **You Tap Resources.** Politics and policy are about the distribution of scarce resources. By educating the public and drawing attention to our issues, you help to raise them in importance among competing causes.

Part II

Building a Framework for Action

Getting Started: Building your Parish's Capacity for Advocacy

Your capacity for advocacy and the methods you choose will depend on your parish structure and size and the key issues you focus on. No one plan fits all, so you have flexibility to determine what works best for you. The most successful efforts work to incorporate participation of parishioners at all levels of the parish, uniting them in the dual call to serve and advocate. Also, remember that strength lies in numbers, so be sure to communicate broadly.

Step 1: Consult with Your Pastor.

With a group of interested parishioners, a leadership group – people with a concern for social policy and an understanding of the relationship between faith and action – bring your desire to create an advocacy ministry to the pastor. His input, guidance and support, along with that of the parish leadership, will be critical to your success. Keep the pastor informed along each step of the way. Be sure that he knows your efforts will be an enhancement to ongoing parish ministries, not an additional burden on him or the parish staff/leadership.

Step 2: Discern with Existing Parish Ministry Groups.

With your leadership group, convene a gathering of the leaders of existing parish ministry groups. Your parish council, parish respect life committee, parish social ministry committee or the leaders of direct service ministries are just some examples of parish ministries you could consult. Have a time of prayer and discernment with them to invite God's wisdom about advocacy in your parish.

Step 3: Be Clear About the Role of Advocacy.

Your prayer and reflection can be a time for you to explore with existing parish ministry leaders the role and the importance of advocacy and the relationship between advocacy and the important work their ministries are already doing. Make it clear that, while advocacy would not be an additional responsibility for any present ministry, it would work in conjunction with existing ministries to support their goals. This could be an opportunity for the existing groups to identify the advocacy issues that are related to their ministries: Prolife ministries and their legislative efforts to end abortion, food pantries with groups working to end hunger; support for seniors and opposition to euthanasia. Invite the leaders of existing parish ministry groups to do some discernment about their interest and the interests of their members. Discuss how public policy impacts those they serve.

Step 4: Tap the Knowledge of Existing Ministries.

Those active in existing parish ministries will likely know of parishioners whose interests and gifts would lend themselves well to advocacy. Tap that knowledge and energy. Don't forget to

consult with other parish leaders, staff and other ministry leaders. Don't limit yourself just to those you think might know someone interested in being part of a legislative advocacy effort. The choir director, the Catechetical director, the RCIA leaders, the Youth Ministers – all might be able to give you recommendations about your fellow parishioners who would like to become engaged in an advocacy ministry. Don't forget to make connections with other ministry leaders about how advocacy will support their present efforts.

Step 5: Know Each Person's Gifts.

As you build the capacity of your parish advocacy ministry, evaluate the specific expertise that each person brings in order to maximize their time and effort. Sit down with each person and learn where their interests lie, what their concerns for the parish and the community are and what role they'd like to play in advocacy. Take notes of individual strengths and weaknesses to determine who would be best suited to what role in advocacy ministry.

Step 6: Create a Space for the Holy Spirit.

Resist the urge to 'do it all.' Henri Nouwen, in his book "The Selfless Way of Christ", wrote about "the temptations of being relevant, spectacular and powerful." As you discern what role you will play in an advocacy ministry, be sure to create a space for the work of the Holy Spirit in guiding you to be welcoming and inclusive of fellow parishioners with passion and energy for advocacy. The best advocacy ministry will have a broad-base in the parish and include the efforts of many parishioners – not just a handful of leaders who do all the work. A welcoming tone and opportunities for genuine involvement and ownership for your fellow parishioners are essential elements to a successful advocacy ministry.

Step 7: Connect with Existing Local, State, National and International Advocacy Efforts.

By working with existing Catholic advocacy groups at the local, state, national and international levels, you will contribute to a clear and compelling message that will be repeated often in the communication and education efforts of multiple advocates. This kind of consistency of message is key – and a critical reason for working with existing Catholic advocacy groups to maximize your parish's efforts.

At the state level, Catholic advocacy is coordinated by the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference. At the federal level, Catholic advocacy is coordinated by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Websites for official Catholic advocacy are listed on page 27.

Part III

Catholic Social Teaching Resources

This section outlines numerous resources for further study of Catholic social teaching. The resources are divided into those with the Primary Authority of the Catholic Church – Papal Encyclicals, Bishops’ pastoral letters and the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

Primary Authorities

The documents in each of the following sections are followed by links to online sources where you can access the text. Additionally, the following resources contain a comprehensive library of sources from all of the categories listed below.

- **The Holy See:** This is the Web site of the Vatican. You can search and access the texts of the Catechism, Church teachings, Papal writings and addresses, etc. Visit the site at http://www.vatican.va/phome_en.htm.
- **Vatican Statement: Doctrinal Note on Political Life**

Papal Encyclicals

Papal Encyclicals are documents written by the Pope for the universal Church that pertain ordinarily to doctrinal, moral, or disciplinary matters. Through these letters, the Pope exercises his ordinary magisterium – or declarations that are then subject to future change. Catholics must assent to the doctrinal and moral content of these documents. The following documents may prove useful as you study Catholic social teaching. Each of them can be accessed at the Vatican Web site. Choose the appropriate Pope and then search his listed works at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/.

- Rerum Novarum (The Condition of Labor), Pope Leo XIII, 1891
- Quadragesimo Anno (After Forty Years), Pope Pius XI, 1931
- Mater et Magistra (Christianity and Social Progress), Pope John XXIII, 1961
- Pacem in Terris (Peace on Earth), Pope John XXIII, 1961
- Populorum Progresso (On the Development of Peoples), Pope Paul VI, 1967
- Humanae Vitae (Human Life), Pope Paul VI, 1968
- Octogesima Adveniens (A Call to Action), Pope Paul VI, 1971

Encyclicals of Pope John Paul II

- *Laborum Exercem* (On Human Work), 1981
- *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (The Social Concerns of the Church), 1988
- *Centesimus Annus* (100 Years), 1991
- *Evangelium Vitae* (The Gospel of Life), 1995
- *Fides et Ratio* (Faith and Reason), 1998

Encyclicals of Pope Benedict XVI

- *Deus Caritas Est* (2006)
- *Caritas et Veritate* (2009)

Documents of Vatican II (1965)

Access these documents at: http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/

- *Lumen Gentium* (Pastoral Constitution on the Church)
- *Gaudium et Spes* (The Church in the Modern World)
- *Ad Gentes* (On Missionary Activity of the Church)

Bishop Zubik's Pastoral Letters

- *The Church Alive* (2008)
- *The Church Sharing* (2009)
- *The Church Living* (2009)

Finally, the **Pennsylvania Catholic Conference** has statements on social issues of concern for Catholics in our Commonwealth.

Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church

“The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, a unique, unprecedented document in the history of the Church, serves as a tool to inspire and guide the faithful, who are faced with moral and pastoral challenges daily. It is divided into five sections: an introduction, three parts,

and a conclusion entitled “For a Civilization of Love.” The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church is a must-have resource for leaders of social ministry at the diocesan and parish level as well as those in religious education, schools, and youth and young adult ministry,” USCCB Publishing.

Available through USCCB Publishing at:

<http://www.usccbpublishing.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=505>, or online at:

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html

The Catechism of the Catholic Church

The Catechism of the Church gives us guidance on how to respond to the call to justice. The most recent version, updated in 1997, can be found at the following sites:

- The Vatican Web site: <http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc/index.htm>
- The UNITED STATES Conference of Catholic Bishops: <http://www.usccb.org/catechism/text/>

For a focus on Catholic social teaching, see Part Three: Life in Christ. Both Section One: Man’s Vocation and Section Two: The Ten Commandments address issues of justice. Article 7 of Section Two proves especially relevant.

Part IV

Glossary of Common Legislative Terms

Act	Legislation that has passed both the House and Senate and become law.
Amendment	A change to a bill, motion, act or to the Constitution. Amendments are proposed by Members of Congress and then usually debated and voted on by the same procedure as a bill.
Appropriation	A formal approval to draw funds from the Treasury for specific purposes. Congress passes appropriations bills each year to fund programs for the next fiscal year. Appropriations bills originate in the House.
Authorization	A law that creates a program and sets funding limits. The actual drawing of funds from the Treasury and funding amount are established by appropriation.
Bill	A proposed law. The bill is named H.R. (House) or S. (Senate) by the house in which it is first introduced and then by a number assigned it in the order it was introduced.
Budget Request	The president's annual proposal to Congress, usually submitted in early February, for federal expenditures and revenues for the following federal fiscal year (which begins October 1).
Budget Authority	Authority provided by appropriations bills to enter into obligations that will result in immediate or future outlays involving federal funds.
Budget Reconciliation	The process used by Congress to amend tax and entitlement programs to meet the instructions in the budget resolution regarding outlay and revenue targets.
Budget Resolution	House and Senate-passed guidelines, and later caps, on federal budget authority and outlays. The budget resolution is considered a matter of internal congressional rules and procedures and is not submitted to the president for a signature or veto. Bills that would exceed budget caps are subject to a point of order (violation of the rules of the House and Senate) – though waivers have been granted in both houses.

Caucus	Meeting of the Democratic or Republican Members of Congress to determine policies or choose leaders; or a bipartisan group of Members with a similar issue, such as the Hunger Caucus.
Closed Rule	A rule in the House that prohibits the offering of any amendments to a bill on the floor. A bill considered under closed rule must be voted up or down as it is when reported out of committee.
Cloture	A method of limiting debate on a bill or ending a filibuster in the Senate. Sixty of the 100 senators must vote in favor of cloture for it to occur.
Committee	A subgroup of Members of the House or Senate that has jurisdiction over a subset of issues and prepares legislation for consideration for the larger chamber. Committees are often divided into subcommittees. Subcommittees hold hearings, study and recommend changes in legislation to the full committee. Only a full committee can report a bill to the floor of the House or Senate for action.
Committee Jurisdiction	The issues and responsibilities assigned to a committee by a rule, resolution, precedent, or practice. These include legislative matters, oversight of departments and investigations, and nominations of executive officers.
Companion Bills	Similar or identical bills introduced both in the House and Senate, separately.
Conference Committee	A committee comprised of senators and representatives appointed by the leadership in their respective chambers to resolve differences between House and Senate-passed versions of the same legislation.
Continuing Resolution	A resolution enacted to allow specific executive branch agencies to continue operating based on the previous year's appropriations, if funds have not been appropriated for them by October 1 for the new fiscal year of operation.
Co-Sponsor	A senator or representative who joins in sponsoring a piece of legislation but is not the one who introduced the legislation. A large number of co-sponsors increases a bill's chances for consideration.
Discretionary Spending	Spending that is controlled and adjusted each year in appropriations acts.

Entitlement Program	A federal program that entitles all persons, businesses, or agencies that meet specified eligibility criteria to certain benefits or services – such as social security, Medicare, food stamps, foster care, adoption assistance, etc. An entitlement program may be a capped entitlement, in which a cap or limit on total annual funding is set by the authorizing legislation (e.g. TANF, Title XX – Social Services Block Grant); a means-tested entitlement, in which “means” or income is a primary factor in eligibility (e.g., Medicaid, foster care, and adoption assistance); or a non-means-tested entitlement (e.g., social security, Medicare).
Expenditures	Money actually spent from the treasury by the Administration and government agencies. Expenditures are different from appropriations, which are made by Congress and set a limit for expenditures. The two are rarely identical, as expenditures may represent money appropriated two or more years back that has not yet been spent by a program.
Filibuster	A delaying tactic of speaking continuously employed by senators to prevent Senate action on a bill likely to pass if a vote were taken. Sixty Senators must vote to end a filibuster and force a vote on a bill (see Cloture).
Fiscal Year	The federal government’s fiscal year runs from October 1 through September 30.
Hearing	Meetings of committees or subcommittees to gather information on proposed legislation, investigate problems, or explore issues. Witnesses present testimony and answer questions. Media and the public may attend “open” hearings, but cannot attend “closed” or “executive” hearings. Individuals may request to testify, and though they may be turned down, most who make such a request are allowed to at least submit a written statement for the record concerning the subject.
Lame Duck	A member of Congress (or the president) who has not been reelected but whose term of office has not yet ended.
Lobbying	Attempts by individuals or groups who are not members of Congress to influence the passage, the defeat, or the content of legislation.

Majority Leader	In the Senate, the leader of the majority party and the most powerful position in the Senate. In the House, the leader for business on the floor and the principal assistant to the Speaker of the House (the most powerful person in that body.)
Mandatory Spending	Spending (budget authority and outlays) controlled by laws other than annual appropriations acts. See Entitlement Program.
Mark-Up	The process by which members of a committee or subcommittee examine a proposed piece of legislation to discuss and make additions, deletions or amendments. Often, the chairman of the subcommittee drafts a starting proposal, referred to as the “chairman’s mark.”
Member	U.S. senator or U.S. representative.
Minority Leader	The leader of the minority party in the House or Senate.
Omnibus Bill	A bill combining multiple aspects of one subject. Often used in the appropriations bill process to combine different spending bills into one.
Open Rule	A rule governing floor debate in the House that allows germane amendments to be proposed and adopted by majority vote.
Point of Order	An objection by a member of Congress that the pending matter or proceeding is in violation of the rules.
Quorum	The number of senators (51) or representatives (218) that the Constitution requires to be present for the Senate or House to do business. Many times, fewer Members are actually present on the floor, but the Senate or House presumes that a quorum is present unless a roll call vote or quorum call proves otherwise.
Ranking Member	Member of a committee who has the most seniority on the committee from his or her party. Usually refers to the most senior member of the minority party.
Report	A printed record of a committee’s actions and views on a particular bill or matter. Reports are numbered and designated S. Rept. or H. Rept., depending on the house of origination. As a verb, report refers to the action taken by a committee to share its findings with the chamber. The committee studies and changes a bill, and then “reports” its recommendations.

Speaker of the House	The presiding officer of the House, leader of the majority party in the House, and next in line to the vice president for succession to the presidency.
Resolution	A measure passed in one of the houses that gives the intention or sentiment of the chamber, but does not have force as a law.
Sessions	Each Congress (two-year time frame of each Congress) usually has two sessions. Each begins in January and ends when Congress adjourns for the year.
Sponsor	The representative or senator who introduces a bill or resolution.
Supplemental Appropriation	Budget authority provided in an appropriations act in addition to regular or continuing appropriations already provided. Supplemental appropriations are generally passed to cover emergency needs, such as disaster relief, that cannot wait until the following year's regular appropriations act.
Veto	Action by the President to refuse to sign a bill or joint resolution. The bill can then return to its house of origin to be reconsidered, but must gain two-thirds of the vote in both chambers to become law (see veto override).
Veto Override	When members of both the House and Senate vote by a two-thirds majority to set aside a presidential veto of legislation.
Whip	The senator or representative who is elected by members of his/her party to serve as the principal internal lobbyist to persuade legislators to support the party position and also to count votes for the leadership in advance of floor action.

[This glossary used with permission of Catholic Charities USA.]

Part V

The Power of the Press

How to Write Effective Letters to the Editor

Well-crafted letters to the editor can be highly effective advocacy tools. Legislators know that they are one of the most widely read sections of newspapers and magazines, and they use letters to the editor to monitor the thoughts of their constituents. Letters can also convince editorial writers to take a stand on an issue or reporters to explore it in further detail. Use the tips below:

- **Check the Style.** Investigate the publication's preferred length, style and format by reading letters currently in the publication and by looking at submission requirements either in the publication or on its web site.
- **Be Concise.** Many publications often prefer letters to be 250 words or less. Check if your local paper has a specific word limit.
- **Be Quick.** Timeliness is critical as publications often publish letters responding to articles, editorials or other letters the day after they appear. Try to respond quickly through e-mail or fax.
- **Answer Back.** Your letter is more likely to be published if you respond to another article or letter. Be sure to reference the article or letter in your response, citing what upset or pleased you about it.
- **Capture Attention.** Capture the reader's attention with a strong first sentence. Then, use active verbs and avoid using many adjectives.
- **Stay Focused.** Limit your letter to one topic.
- **Stay Local.** Try to connect readers to our issues by including how it will impact your local community. Personal stories can also be effective.
- **Be Honest.** Be sure to check your quotes and facts. Be persuasive but never resort to personal attacks.
- **Identify Yourself.** Remember to include your name, parish name, address and telephone number(s). The publication will likely want to verify that the sender actually wrote the letter.

- **Say Thank You.** Be sure to follow up published letters with a thank you to the editor.
- **Keep Your Diocese Informed.** Please send copies of your published letters to the Diocese of Pittsburgh Department for Human Life and Dignity, so that their lobbying staff remain aware of the messages seen by your legislators in their home districts.

How to Write an Op-Ed

Use the tips below as you consider submitting an op-ed.

- **Check the Style.** Read the publication’s op-ed section often to see typical length and format. See the publication’s web site or call to find out submission guidelines.
- **Create Your Op-Ed.** Create a draft of your op-ed using the tips above for letters to the editor.
- **Make Your Pitch.** Send a letter to “pitch” the importance of your op-ed to the publication and attach a draft.
- **Be Timely.** Submit your pitch letter and draft as early as possible so that you can make requested changes before the deadline.
- **Respect Exclusivity.** Some publications require that an op-ed be submitted and published exclusively by them. Be sure to check before sending your op-ed to multiple sources.
- **Say Thank You.** Be sure to thank editors for published op-eds.
- **Keep Your Diocese Informed.** Please send copies of your published op-ed to the Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh, Department for Human Life and Dignity so they remain aware of the messages seen by your legislators in their home districts.

Part VI

Websites for Catholic Advocates

Pennsylvania Catholic Conference

<http://www.pacatholic.org>

<http://www.pacatholic.org/contact-your-legislators/>

Catholic Charities USA

<http://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/what-we-do/advocacy/>

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/take-action-now/capwiz/>

Catholic Relief Services - Catholics Confront Global Poverty

<http://www.confrontglobalpoverty.org/get-involved/action-center>

Justice for Immigrants

<http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org/index.shtml>

USCCB Pro-Life

<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/>

National Committee for a Human Life Amendment

<http://www.nchla.org/action.asp>

USCCB Defense of Marriage

<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/marriage-and-family/marriage/promotion-and-defense-of-marriage/marriage-policy-and-advocacy.cfm>

USCCB Religious Liberty

<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/religious-liberty/>

USCCB Domestic Social Issues

(poverty, federal budget, environment, unemployment and jobs, death penalty, and more)

<http://www.usccb.org/about/domestic-social-development/issues/index.cfm>

USCCB Justice, Peace and Human Development

(global poverty, debt relief, global issues, war and peace, hunger and more)

<http://www.usccb.org/about/justice-peace-and-human-development/issue-campaigns/>

Part VII

Advocating for School Choice

Why should Catholics support school choice?

The Church teaches that “Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, page 537, section 2223)

“As those first responsible for the education of their children, parents have the right to choose a school for them which corresponds to their own convictions. This right is fundamental.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, page 538, section 2229)

The United States Supreme Court agrees in Pierce vs. the Society of Sisters that “a child is not a mere creation of the state and that parents have the right and high duty to choose their education.”

If this is true, then logically, parents should not face a financial penalty to make this choice, which is a right and obligation.

Research demonstrates parents want choice. Parents become more active participants in the educational process when they choose. Fairness and justice argues for publically supported choice in schooling.

It can also be argued easily that the competition and accountability that flows from choice will produce more effective, efficient schools and at the same time, weed out underperforming schools.

There are many more reasons to support school choice, but for Catholics it is critical that parents be able to select Catholic schools with their own tax money because they are the best vehicles for passing on the faith.

Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania recognizes to some degree this right and duty that parents have to choose a quality school. They have passed two pieces of legislation to support parental choice.

1. The Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) Program

On May 7, 2001, by an overwhelming bipartisan majority, Pennsylvania made history by becoming the first state to pass an education tax credit aimed at corporations. Advocated by former Governor Tom Ridge and a diverse coalition, House Bill 966 – the Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) – provides companies with a 75% tax

credit for donations to a non-profit scholarship or educational improvement organization. The tax credit increases to 90% if the company commits to making the same donation(s) for two consecutive years.

Due to the overwhelming demand and popularity, the legislature has increased the cap on the EITC Program and pre-K EITC five times since its enactment in 2001, with a current cap of \$100 million.

Our own diocese has received around \$30 million in donations since the program's inception. Nearly 5,000 students a year receive grants ranging from \$100 to thousands of dollars based on eligibility and need.

2. The Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit (OSTC)

Since so many children are trapped in underperforming schools, the General Assembly passed the OSTC in July 2012 which followed in the footsteps of the EITC and allowed businesses to give to scholarship organizations to help provide grants to students in these failing schools. The state budget cap on this program is \$50 million. Although both programs do help parents, many still struggle to meet rising tuition payments. It is important for Catholics, as a matter of fundamental justice, to support a program of full school choice so that parents can make quality choices for their children. Education should not be left to chance, it should be a matter of choice.

For more information, you can go to <http://www.paschoolchoice.org/> or for tax credit guidelines go to <http://www.newpa.com/>. You may also contact Dr. Ron Bowes at the Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh at 412-456-3090 or email: rbowes@diopitt.org.

Part VIII

Do's and Don'ts for Legislative Visits

Tips to Communicate With Federal and State Legislators

Do

identify clearly the subject matter or subjects in which you are interested, not just House or Senate bill numbers. Remember: it is easy to get a bill number incorrect.

Do

state why you are concerned about an issue or issues. Your own personal experience is excellent evidence. Explain how you think an issue will affect your business, profession, community, or family.

Do

restrict yourself to one or at most two topics. Concentrate your arguments.

Do

put your thoughts in your own words. This is especially important if you are responding to something you read.

Do

try to establish a relationship with your own legislators. In general, you have more influence as an actual constituent.

Do

communicate while legislation is in committee and subcommittees, as well as when it is on the floor. Legislators have much more influence over legislation with their committees' and subcommittees' jurisdiction.

Don't

be starstruck. Yes, be in awe of our system of democracy in which you are participating in and yes, respect the legislative office... but resist the temptation to be "wowed" by a legislator. Remember: they are your neighbors.

Don't

ever, ever threaten. Don't even hint "I'll never vote for you unless you do what I want." Present the best arguments in favor of your position and ask for their consideration. You needn't remind a legislator of electoral consequences. Visits, phone calls, and mail will be counted without your prompting.

Don't

pretend to wield vast political influence. Communicate with legislators as a constituent, not as a self-appointed spokesperson for your school, neighborhood, community, or profession. However, if you really are a spokesperson for a group be sure to mention it.

Don't

use incendiary rhetoric, innuendos or cliches. Such jargon can make your communications sound mass produced even when they aren't.

Don't

become a pen pal or perpetual informercial. Some legislative offices will become indifferent to you.

Part IX

Diocesan Political Action Guidelines

**Political campaign activity guidelines for parishes and schools
in the Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh**

(see brochure on following page)

Guidelines for the Use of Parish and Diocesan Facilities

Church property is private and Church authority has both the need and the right to regulate its use.

- ◆ Every pastor or diocesan administrator has an obligation to ensure that parish or diocesan facilities are used in accord with diocesan policies.
- ◆ No individual, group, or organization may use parish or diocesan facilities for purposes which contradict in any way the teachings and practices of the Catholic Church.
- ◆ Parish or diocesan facilities can be used only by those who respect the law.
- ◆ No parish or diocesan facility can be used for partisan political activity that either supports or opposes any candidate for public office.
- ◆ A public official or figure may be invited to speak at a parish facility or diocesan forum as an expert or consultant on a particular issue in the interest of the common good, but not for political purposes.
- ◆ If a person's conduct, voting record or public comments are contrary to the teachings of the Church, they should not be given any church award or honor.

The Church and the Political Order

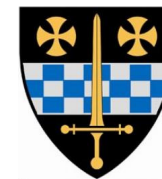
“The Church’s obligation to participate in shaping the moral character of society is a requirement of our faith. It is a basic part of the mission we have received from Jesus Christ, who offers a vision of life revealed to us in Sacred Scripture and Tradition. To echo the teaching of the Second Vatican Council: Christ, the Word made flesh, in showing us the Father’s love, also shows us what it truly means to be human.

Christ’s love for us lets us see our human dignity in full clarity and compels us to love our neighbors as he has loved us. Christ, the Teacher, shows us what is true and good, that is, what is in accord with our human nature as free, intelligent beings created in God’s image and likeness and endowed by the Creator with dignity and rights.”

Forming Consciences For Faithful Citizenship
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Political Action Guidelines:

Political campaign activity guidelines for parishes and schools



Diocese of Pittsburgh
Department for Human Life
and Dignity

Political Responsibility

Our nation's tradition of pluralism is enhanced, not threatened, when religious groups and people of faith bring their convictions and concerns into public life. Indeed, our Church's teaching is in accord with the foundational values that have shaped our nation's history: "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

The Church equips its members to address political and social questions by helping them to develop a well-formed conscience. Catholics have a serious and lifelong obligation to form their consciences in accord with human reason and the teaching of the Church.

Forming Consciences For Faithful Citizenship

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

THE CHURCH MAY ...

- ◆ Address the moral and human dimension of all people.
- ◆ Share Church teachings on human life, human dignity, marriage, religious liberty, the common good, justice and peace.
- ◆ Apply Catholic values to legislation and public issues.
- ◆ Conduct nonpartisan voter registration drives on church property.
- ◆ Encourage citizens to exercise their right to vote.
- ◆ Permit church halls or schools to be used as polling places.

If you have questions regarding these guidelines, please contact the
Diocese of Pittsburgh
Department for Human Life & Dignity
at 412-456-3157.

THE CHURCH MAY NOT ...

- ◆ Endorse or oppose particular candidates for public office, either directly or indirectly.
- ◆ Distribute, or to allow groups or individuals to distribute, partisan campaign literature under church auspices or on church property.
- ◆ Place on church property political advertisements or statements in bulletins, newsletters or other publications.
- ◆ Arrange for individuals or groups to work for a particular candidate for public office.
- ◆ Invite only selected candidates to address church-sponsored groups.
- ◆ Allow church equipment or property to be used on behalf of or in opposition to a particular candidate. For example, political signage on church property is prohibited.
- ◆ Conduct voter registrations slanted toward one political party or candidate.
- ◆ Distribute a candidate survey or voter guide that evidences a bias toward certain issues or candidates.

Part X

Pennsylvania Catholic Conference Advocacy Toolkit

**(walks you through setting up, attending and following up
on an in-person visit with your legislator)**

The following booklet may also be accessed
directly from the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference website at:

[http://www.pacatholic.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/10/PCC legislative visit toolkit.pdf](http://www.pacatholic.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/10/PCC_legislative_visit_toolkit.pdf)



PENNSYLVANIA
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

ADVOCACY
TOOLKIT



INDEX OF TOOLS:

- **WHY VISIT YOUR LEGISLATORS?**
- **SETTING UP A MEETING**
- **TALKING TO LEGISLATORS**
- **WHAT YOUR LEGISLATORS MAY NOT KNOW**
- **AFTER THE MEETING**
- **EXAMPLES OF PREPARED MESSAGES FOR CURRENT ISSUES**

In the Catholic Tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation. This obligation is rooted in our baptismal commitment to follow Jesus Christ and to bear Christian witness in all we do.

-Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

WHY VISIT YOUR LEGISLATORS?

- Every year issues come before the state legislature that affect the Catholic Church, our schools, ministries and Catholic individuals in a direct way.
- If you are hosting an event, are featured in a positive news story or run a program that has a benefit within the community, your legislators should hear about it.
- It's important for lawmakers to meet with their Catholic constituents to hear about the issues that matter to them and to learn why they matter.
- As Catholics we have a moral obligation to get involved with the public debate. When we fulfill this civic duty together, we can make the "the weight of (our) convictions so influential that, as a result, the exercise of civil authority will be just and laws will accord with the moral precepts and the common good."¹
- It's important for legislators to learn about the Catholic presence in their communities and how it benefits all of their constituents, regardless of creed.
- A meeting will always be more memorable than an email.
- Studies show that in-person visits from constituents have the most impact on legislators and their staff – more than emails, phone calls and letters!

SETTING UP A MEETING

- Find your legislator via our website, www.pacatholic.org.
- Meetings in the legislator's district office are usually best, because legislators are typically less busy than when in Harrisburg. Also, it will save you travel time.
- When requesting the meeting, explain that you are a constituent and that you would like to talk about issues that are important to you.
- Sometimes the legislator is not available, but a member of his or her staff is. The staff member will pass along your comments to the legislator. Do not be

¹ *Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People, 14, Vatican II, 1965*

disappointed if you meet with staff. Often they are well versed on issues and can be very influential to a legislator's position.

TALKING TO LEGISLATORS

Know thy legislators:

- Google the legislator's name to find his or her website. Read the online biography page and find out about your legislator's interests and hobbies.
- Visit www.pacatholic.org to see what legislative issues are currently being pursued.
- Study your legislator's voting records and statements, particularly on the issues for which you are advocating.
- Do you have any mutual friends? Find out what you have in common.
- If you are unsure or uneasy about a visit, contact PCC staff to ask for more information at 717-238-9613.

Be clear about your request:

- Assume legislators/staff know little or nothing about what you do and the issue you've come to talk to them about, until you learn otherwise.
- Your job is to inform, educate and ASK for their support on an important issue. Their job is to REPRESENT you and your neighbors.

We in America do not have a government by the majority. We have government by the majority who participate.

- Thomas Jefferson

Explain the issue in terms important to them:

[Remember: politicians work just as hard at survival as any other business.]

- Why is it in his or her interest to support our position?
- What is the benefit to the community?
- Is the idea/issue popular? Be able to demonstrate this in some way.
- Can they make their mark with this issue?
- Are you or your family, parish, school, or organization helping their constituents in some way?

Always tell the truth:

There should only be two responses to questions posed to you:

- The answer.
- Or if you don't know, "I'll find out." It's okay to tell them you will email or call with the information they are requesting.

Listen Closely To Their Answers:

“Yes” sounds like:

- “I agree, and will support that.”

“No” sounds like:

- “I’m with you but hope it doesn’t come up for a vote.”
- “I don’t want the committee to consider this legislation.”
- “You make some good points.”
- “Send me more information.”
- “I do not support...but might not oppose.”

WHAT YOUR LEGISLATORS MAY NOT KNOW

- Come with a few positive anecdotes about how your ministry, parish, school or family helps and participates in the community.
- Your “ask” should be specific. For example, “Please support continued funding for these programs in this year’s budget at the same level as last year.”
- Explain the services provided by the Church in your region, and give a quick overview of other ministries such as Catholic Charities or other facilities in the legislator’s district.
 - Many people do not know the depth or reach of the Catholic presence – including charities, schools, parishes, families, etc. – and are not aware that many of the community organizations they are familiar with are Catholic.
- If you have this info, share how many people were helped in your area in the last year.
 - i.e. what important services are you providing for their constituents?
- Remember: Numbers are good, but adding a personal story makes the meeting memorable.

AFTER THE MEETING

- Remember to send any additional information the legislator or staff may have asked for in a timely manner
- Please remember to mail or email a thank you note to the legislator for meeting with you, and repeat your specific request in a kind manner.
- In the future, if you are hosting an event, are featured in a positive news story or run a program that has a benefit within the community, your legislators should hear about it. You can always contact your legislator again!

EXAMPLES OF SUGGESTED TALKING POINTS FOR CURRENT ISSUES

Abortion Opt-Out:

- Please pass legislation that prohibits insurance providers that participate in the insurance exchanges created by the federal health care reform law from covering elective abortion services.
- Favorable votes were taken in both chambers last session, indicating widespread support, but the bill did not make it to final passage.
- Taxpayer money should not fund abortions. Please represent me and the other Catholics in your district by helping this legislation get passed this year.

School Choice:

- Please add additional funding to the existing Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program. The longstanding “EITC 1.0” program has helped hundreds of thousands of students attend the school of their choice, including Catholic schools.
- The EITC 2.0 program is helping even more students by creating special scholarships particularly for income eligible students in the lowest performing 15% of public schools.
- These programs allow students a chance at the best possible education and support parents in choosing the best educational option for their children. Please increase funding to these programs.

Federal Issue – HHS Mandate:

- When legislation comes before you, please represent me by supporting measures that ensure that the rights of conscience of all participants in our nation's health care system will be respected.
- I am extremely disappointed in the decision of the Department of Health and Human Services to continue to demand coverage of sterilization, contraception and abortion causing drugs.
- I agree with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, which points to key areas of concern: the narrow understanding of a religious ministry; compelling church ministries to fund and facilitate services such as contraceptives, including abortion-inducing drugs, and sterilization that violate Catholic teaching; and disregard of the conscience rights of for-profit business owners.
- Thank you for representing me by taking a stand in support of religious liberty.

If you cannot meet with your legislator, you can email them through the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference’s Advocacy Network [here](#).

www: pacatholic.org | *facebook:* pacatholic | *twitter:* @pacatholic

