

Guidelines for the Use of Parish and Diocesan Facilities

1. Every pastor or school administrator has an obligation to determine how parish or diocesan facilities will be used by any individual, group, or organization.
2. No individual, group, or organization may use parish or diocesan facilities for purposes which contradict in any way the teaching and practices of the Catholic Church.
3. Parish or diocesan facilities can be used only by those who respect the law.
4. No parish or diocesan facility can be used for partisan political activity, to either support or oppose any candidate for public office.
5. 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.
6. If a person's conduct, voting record, or public comments are contrary to the teachings of the Church, he or she should not be given any Church award, honor, or endorsement.

The Church and the Political Order

It is the Church's role as a community of faith to call attention to the moral and religious dimension of secular issues, to keep alive the values of the Gospel as a norm for social and political life, and to point out the demands of the Christian faith for a just transformation of society. Such a ministry on the part of every individual as well as the organizational Church inevitably involves political consequences and touches upon public affairs.

From Political Responsibility USCC 1987

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Political Action Guidelines

Political campaign activity guidelines for parishes and schools



**Diocese of Pittsburgh
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Political Responsibility

From *A Call to Political Responsibility* USCC 1996

Elections are a time for debate and decisions on the leaders, policies, and values that will guide our nation. As citizens, Catholics need to face our own political responsibilities; to register and vote; to understand issues and assess candidates' positions and qualifications; and to join with others in advocating for the common good.



The Constitution of the United States protects the right of religious bodies to speak out without governmental interference, endorsement, or sanction. The Church should expect neither favoritism nor discrimination in her public role.



The challenge to the Church is to be principled without being ideological, to be political without being partisan, to be civil without being soft, to be involved without being used. This kind of political responsibility does not involve religious leaders telling people how to vote or religious tests for candidates. Rather, the Church encourages its members to use their voices and votes to enrich the democratic life of our nation.

PERMITTED

- To address the moral and human dimension of the full range of people.
- To share Church teaching on human life, human rights, and justice and peace.
- To apply Catholic values to legislation and public issues.
- To conduct a nonpartisan voter registration drive on church property.
- To encourage citizens to exercise their right to vote.
- To permit church halls or schools to be used as polling places.



PROHIBITED

- To endorse or oppose, either directly or indirectly, particular candidates for public office.
- To distribute, or to allow others to distribute, partisan campaign literature under Church auspices or on Church property.
- To place political advertisements or statements in bulletins, newsletters, or circulars.
- To arrange for groups to work for a particular candidate for public office.
- To invite only selected candidates to address your church-sponsored group.
- To allow church equipment or property to be used on behalf of, or in opposition to, a particular candidate.
- To conduct voter registration slanted toward one candidate or political party.
- To distribute a biased candidate survey, that is, one that evidences a bias toward certain issues.