

**Pennsylvania Catholic Conference**  
**Interview with Gubernatorial Candidate Tom Corbett - July 8, 2010**

**How will your personal religious beliefs influence your public leadership?**

Having been raised Catholic it is very easy for me to follow the Catholic faith. I had very good teachers in my family and school. I went K-8 in Catholic schools. Recently someone asked me, "What guides you?" I said my faith. Everything we learn through our catechism classes becomes part of us; eventually the principles become second nature. My decisions now and in the past are really made instinctively by following the Golden Rule and the Ten Commandments. It's very hard for me to separate which specific experiences guide me most. Overall, it's the way I was brought up. It's my Catholic education, the Boy Scouts, the training I got in the military, basic training in particular. These experiences coalesced to form the man that I became and they helped to develop my judgment, my decision making process. But all judgments really go back to the basic lessons we learned in Catholic grade school.

**How should Pennsylvania address the needs of the poor and what about the elderly?**

Let me answer the second one first. You can see by what I have done in creating an elder abuse task force, that I believe we must protect our two most vulnerable populations: our children and our seniors. Unfortunately, our population of seniors is growing faster than our population of children. Many younger people are moving out of state; but also, with the health care we have today, seniors are living much longer. They are staying here in Pennsylvania. As a society, we have responsibility to take care of them. I would say the same thing goes for the poor.

**What is your view on expanding protection for unborn children in Pennsylvania?**

Pennsylvania's Abortion Control Act is one of the toughest laws in the country. I have told many people that if we can get something stronger to the governor's desk I would be happy to sign it.

**What is your vision of implementing federal health care reform?**

First, let's talk about the Healthcare Reform Act. I think as written it is unconstitutional. Do I believe we need healthcare reform? Absolutely, but I don't believe that we can use unconstitutional means to do it. That is why we brought the lawsuit. Do we need to have some action toward pre-existing conditions? Yes, we do. Many Republicans and even some Democrats have said that this is such a big issue we can't do it all at one time. You have to do it block by block, and part by part. This was jammed down everybody's throat in an unconstitutional way, because I don't believe the federal government can tell you what you have to buy. In my opinion right now, if we are successful in the lawsuit, the whole bill fails because they did not include a severability clause that would excise what is unconstitutional and allow the other components to continue. Probably it was a gamble on their part because in their minds they need to require everybody to buy insurance to create the pool of money needed for it to work. It probably could have been done correctly if they allowed the states to decide if they want to participate or not. Proponents didn't want to fight that battle in 50 states, so they fought it in Congress. As you know, it passed by a very slim number in the House. I think four votes.

No matter what happens in the lawsuit, as an executive, I have to lead the state going forward. But we are certainly going to take a very close look and make sure it doesn't contradict Pennsylvania law. I know one concern is the issue of abortion. We do not support that. We do not support the public funding of abortion. I think the states have the right to say they won't support the public funding of abortion.

## What is your opinion on school choice?

I am for it. I think we should pursue a voucher proposal to provide for more comprehensive school choice. The legislature has changed a lot since EITC started. These days more people are concerned with the performance or lack thereof of public schools across Pennsylvania. Since the time when Governor Ridge was trying to get vouchers passed, charter schools have taken root everywhere. People realize that there is a real demand for an alternative to the basic public education system. So, I think it would be a good time after this election to see if we can get voucher legislation through the legislature.

I have also been a supporter of Educational Improvement Tax Credit program from the day it passed. At the time, I worked for Waste Management doing government affairs. I went to our regional controller and said this is something we need to do. He looked at it and said, "They don't mean this, do they?" I said yes they do. This is a no brainer for a company. To help a school like that and to be able to write that off on the taxes is a good idea. Waste Management got involved right away.

## Your position on the death penalty.

I am for the death penalty.

My position on the death penalty comes from my background as an assistant district attorney and an assistant United States attorney, and from my years of experience with the law. The law of Pennsylvania clearly defines death penalty criteria. It guides juries to determine whether A) the person is guilty and B) does he or she deserve the death penalty as a punishment.

**Efforts have been made to mandate Catholic institutions to provide services that would be contrary to their moral teachings and religious values. Would you support legislation to provide conscience protection? And beyond health care organizations what about conscience protection for employers or individuals in terms of even purchasing coverage that would contain mandates that you would have to provide certain?**

We worked together on the emergency contraception regulations. We didn't get everything we wanted in that, but we did get some wording to make it where a hospital just had to make that service available in some other way.

Part of the reason why I have a problem with health care reform is my concern over religious freedom. I think we need to have a separation there. I support the ability to object to providing a service contrary to religious beliefs.

## How would you address illegal immigration?

The entire nation has a problem with illegal immigration. Some have made it an issue here in Pennsylvania like Hazleton Mayor Lou Barletta. It was a problem in his community. I think localities in the state should be able to provide services to legal immigrants only.

I don't know how you measure the cost of illegal immigration at this point. Just take a look at what is going on at the southern border. The federal government has failed to deal with it, and they really do need to. What Arizona did with their law is not as the national media would have you believe. I read it. The police cannot just come up to you and say that want to see your papers. There has to be a pre-existing condition, something else has to happen. Police can't inquire about immigration status without first stopping that individual for another reason. Sort of like when we stop somebody for speeding and then give him or her a ticket for not wearing a

seatbelt. I don't see why a state can't ask someone they are arresting to provide a driver's license or other ID. If a person has a valid ID, more likely than not he or she is here legally.

As governor would not be directly involved in this because it is a constitutional amendment, but what are your views on the Pennsylvania Marriage Protection Amendment?

I have always supported that.

**Governor Rendell has already implemented a strategic plan for health care reform. How would you deal with that?**

First, we would sit down and look at exactly what Governor Rendell implements. I have grave concern that we are moving down this trail with a possibility that we are wasting our time and money. At the same time if we are not successful with the lawsuit, then we might find ourselves behind the eight ball if we haven't done what we need to do. We really have to review all the details before I could say exactly what we would do. Part of the problem with this bill is you have the federal government again giving out money to the states. It's like they are trying to get the states addicted to federal money. Highways are a prime example. They lowered the speed limit to 55 and told the states that if they didn't lower their speed limit to 55, they wouldn't get any gas tax dollars. It would be easy to say we won't take any federal tax dollars until you realize that dollars from Pennsylvania taxpayers would go to Washington, but we would not get anything back. The only way that would work is if all 50 governors say they are not taking anything, stop doing this. But the likelihood of that happening is remote. If you got 30 or 35 Republican governors saying lets look at future spending, then we might get somewhere.

**What else would you like to say to the Catholic public?**

This statement is to the whole public, not just the Catholic public. I tell people the reason I am running for governor is because of the challenge to keep our kids here in Pennsylvania. We are losing a huge talent pool to other states that are more competitive. The more young people we lose, the less competitive we become intellectually and culturally. Other states will get ahead of us. We have a great state here and I want to keep it great.

This campaign is about jobs, jobs today, but more so jobs tomorrow. Jobs that are going to keep our children here in Pennsylvania, that will keep our culture growing, keep Pennsylvania as a leader. We talk about a global economy. Just look at how we compete with China and India and South Korea today. What we do in these next 4 years, or 8 years if I were to be reelected, really sets the foundation for the next century. Where are our kids going to be? Where are our grandchildren going to be 30, 40 years from now? Are they going to be here in Pennsylvania with a growing, thriving economy? Or are they going to be in another state like Texas, Tennessee, and Mississippi? Where are they going to be? I want them here in Pennsylvania.