



IEWPOINT

Newsletter of the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference

SPECIAL ISSUE

General Election 2008



For decades, the PCC has upheld its long-standing tradition of surveying candidates for political office at both the federal and state levels, and educating voters about key Catholic issues. The questionnaires and the candidate research encompass a wide range of topics about the right to life and the dignity of the human person, but also marriage and family, justice and peace, religious liberty, and others. The outcome of the November election will affect the future of many issues. The "voter guides" that are found within this newsletter are for information purposes only. The Conference neither supports nor opposes any candidate for public office. Ultimately, each voter must inform his or her own conscience and cast a vote accordingly before God. Each of us is responsible for our own free will choices inside and outside the voting booth.

Know the positions of...

The Presidential Candidates

Barack Obama ☆ John McCain
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Know the positions of...

The Statewide Candidates

Attorney General ☆ Auditor General
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ELECTION DAY is November 4





What is the PCC?

The Pennsylvania Catholic Conference is the public affairs arm of Pennsylvania's Catholic bishops and the Catholic dioceses of Pennsylvania. There are 10 Catholic dioceses in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Eight are Latin Rite dioceses, fully contained within the Commonwealth. Two are Byzantine Rite dioceses with Apostolic Sees in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh.

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A Note from the PCC...

As a service to Catholic voters, the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference (PCC) sent a questionnaire to both presidential candidates seeking their opinions on 16 specific questions. Neither campaign responded by the deadline. Therefore, in keeping with its mission to educate and inform Catholics about public policy, the PCC researched the candidates to ascertain their positions on the issues. PCC staff and a team of Catholic journalists and communications professionals from around the state gathered information from voting records, public statements, campaign materials and other public sources looking for illustrations of each candidate's views on various issues.

The PCC published the data on its website (www.pacatholic.org), in a two-page bulletin insert, and here in the *Viewpoint* newsletter. All information cites the most original source possible. On the website, every statement is connected to a hyperlink that takes the viewer directly to the source so he or she can read the candidates' comments or roll call vote directly.

Research on voting records was conducted using three sources: the independent govtrack.us website, the Library of Congress' THOMAS website, and the website of the U.S. Senate itself. Most other statements were derived from the candidates' own political websites or quotes at public appearances as reported in the media.

The PCC researched a wide range of topics; the outcome of the November election will affect the future of many issues. The topics in the PCC materials are arranged alphabetically simply for convenience.

The comments, votes and statements in the PCC materials are merely snapshots from each candidate's public career and campaign for president. The candidates also represent the platforms of their political parties, which may offer a broader perspective of the issues. Voters should keep their eyes and ears open throughout the election season to continually enlighten their understanding of the candidates and their positions.

The Conference neither supports nor opposes any candidate for public office. Ultimately, each voter must inform his or her own conscience and cast a vote accordingly before God. Each of us is responsible for our own free will choices inside and outside the voting booth.

Do you have questions about the election? Wonder where your polling place is? Curious about the kind of voting machines used in your county?

Get answers at

www.votespa.com



The Presidential Candidates



DEMOCRAT

Illinois Senator
Barack Obama



REPUBLICAN



Arizona Senator
John McCain

ABORTION

Senator Barack Obama's campaign website says he is "a consistent champion of reproductive choice and will make preserving women's rights under *Roe v. Wade* a priority as President." In the Illinois State Senate, he opposed SB 1082 which would have granted that "a live child born as a result of an abortion shall be fully recognized as a human person and accorded immediate protection under the law." www.ilga.gov He also co-sponsored the federal Freedom of Choice Act, a bill that would make partial-birth abortion legal again, provide for taxpayer funding of abortion, and invalidate every state and federal limitation on abortion.* www.barackobama.com

"John McCain believes *Roe v. Wade* is a flawed decision that must be overturned, and as president he will nominate judges who understand that courts should not be in the business of legislating from the bench. Constitutional balance would be restored by the reversal of *Roe v. Wade*, returning the abortion question to the individual states." He voted in favor of the Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act of 2003 and in favor of the Born-Alive Infants Protection Act of 2002 which grants protection to "every infant member of the species homo sapiens who is born alive at any stage of development" including those born as a result of induced abortion.* www.johnmccain.com

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

"While the evidence tells me that the death penalty does little to deter crime, I believe there are some crimes—mass murder, the rape and murder of a child—so heinous that the community is justified in expressing the full measure of its outrage by meting out the ultimate punishment." *The Audacity of Hope* by Barack Obama, p. 58 October 1, 2006

Voted yes on federal legislation calling for the death penalty for the terrorist murder of U.S. nationals abroad (*S. 1798 – October 26, 1989*).* Also voted yes on a Senate bill to limit death penalty appeals (*S. 735 – April 17, 1996*).* (NOTE: Senator Obama was not in the U.S. Senate when this legislation was considered.) McCain criticized the Supreme Court's 5-4 decision in June 2008 that ruled imposition of the death penalty for the rape of a child is unconstitutional. *Los Angeles Times*, June 26, 2008

EDUCATION/SCHOOL CHOICE

"Senator Obama has always been a critic of vouchers ... Throughout his career, he has voted against voucher proposals and voiced concern for siphoning off resources from our public schools." Obama's education agenda "does not include vouchers, in any shape or form." *Statement to Education Week*, February 20, 2008

Senator McCain, himself the father of private school students, told the National Urban League, "Everybody should have the same choice Cindy and I and Sen. Obama did." McCain stated that he favors vouchers that give parents more school choices. *Associated Press*, August 1, 2008

These comments, votes and statements are snapshots from each candidate's public career and campaign for president. The candidates also represent the platforms of their political parties, which may offer a broader perspective of the issues. To review the platforms, log on to:

www.democrats.org/a/party/platform.html

www.gopplatform2008.com

* Research on voting records was conducted with www.govtrack.us, www.thomas.gov and www.senate.gov.

MORE on the next page →

Barack Obama

John McCain

ENFORCING OBSCENITY LAWS

Senator Obama "supports tough penalties, increased enforcement resources and forensic tools for law enforcement, and collaboration between law enforcement and the private sector to identify and prosecute people who abuse the Internet to try to exploit children." www.barackobama.com

Introducing legislation to combat child pornography in 2006, Senator McCain explained, "... this legislation should result in more thorough reporting of child pornography ... which will lead to more prosecutions and convictions and, more importantly, to the rescue of more children." *Speech on Senate floor, December 6, 2006*

GLOBAL POVERTY

"I know development assistance is not the most popular program, but as President, I will make the case to the American people that it can be our best investment in increasing the common security of the entire world ... That's why I'll double our foreign assistance to \$50 billion by 2012, and use it to support a stable future in failing states, and sustainable growth in Africa; to halve global poverty and to roll back disease." *Speech on foreign policy, July 16, 2008, Washington, DC*

At several of his town hall meetings, McCain has said that he sees foreign assistance as a key factor in securing America. He sees aid as a tool to help eliminate poverty, HIV/AIDS and other conditions that he says make people look toward extremism. "It really needs to eliminate many of the breeding grounds for extremism, which is poverty, which is HIV/AIDS, which is all of these terrible conditions that make people totally dissatisfied and then look to extremism, particularly Islamic extremism," he told a town hall meeting in New Hampshire last month. *As reported by National Public Radio August 7, 2008*

HEALTHCARE

The Obama plan for reforming the health care system would "establish a new public insurance program, available to Americans who neither qualify for Medicaid or SCHIP nor have access to insurance through their employers, as well as to small businesses that want to offer insurance to their employees." www.barackobama.com

The McCain health care reform plan would "use competition to improve the quality of health insurance with greater variety to match people's needs, lower prices, and portability." His campaign website says his plan offers families a direct refundable tax credit to offset the cost of insurance. Families will be able to choose the insurance provider. www.johnmccain.com

IMMIGRATION

Senator Obama supported legislation to provide immigrants an opportunity to remain in the country and earn citizenship by paying fines and back taxes, learning English, satisfying a work requirement, and passing a criminal background check. www.obama.senate.gov/issues/immigration Senator Obama also "realizes the need to increase the number of people we allow into the country legally to a level that keeps families together and meets the demand for jobs that employers cannot fill." www.barackobama.com

"Why not say to those undocumented workers who are working the jobs that the rest of us refuse, come out of the shadows ... pay a fine, stay employed, learn our language, pay your taxes, obey our laws, and earn the right to be an American." *Statement on U.S. Senate floor regarding the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act, May 25, 2006** Senator McCain's immigration program would "provide a system that is fair, humane, realistic, and ensures the rights of the individual and families will be protected (and) ensure that families are reunited." www.johnmccain.com

* Research on voting records was conducted with www.govtrack.us, www.thomas.gov and www.senate.gov.

Barack Obama

John McCain

INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE AND PEACE

"Immediately upon taking office, Obama will give his Secretary of Defense and military commanders a new mission in Iraq: ending the war. The removal of our troops will be responsible and phased, directed by military commanders on the ground and done in consultation with the Iraqi government. Military experts believe we can safely redeploy combat brigades from Iraq at a pace of 1 to 2 brigades a month that would remove them in 16 months."
www.barackobama.com

"McCain believes it is strategically and morally essential for the United States to support the government of Iraq to become capable of governing itself and safeguarding its people. He strongly disagrees with those who advocate withdrawing American troops before that has occurred...The best way to secure long-term peace and security is to establish a stable, prosperous, and democratic state in Iraq that poses no threat to its neighbors and contributes to the defeat of terrorists. When Iraqi forces can safeguard their own country, American troops can return home."
www.johnmccain.com

MARRIAGE

"Barack Obama supports full civil unions that give same-sex couples equal legal rights and privileges as married couples. Obama also believes we need to repeal the Defense of Marriage Act and enact legislation that would ensure that the 1,100+ federal legal rights and benefits currently provided on the basis of marital status are extended to same-sex couples in civil unions and other legally-recognized unions."
pride.barackobama.com At the Saddleback Forum on August 16, 2008, he said, "I believe that marriage is the union between a man and a woman...I am not someone who promotes same-sex marriage, but I do believe in civil unions."
www.rickwarrennews.com/transcript

Senator McCain's website says he believes the family is the "foundation" of society and "marriage is a union between one man and one woman...As with most issues vital to the preservation and health of civil society, the basic responsibility for preserving and strengthening the family should reside at the level of government closest to the people."
www.johnmccain.com At the Saddleback Forum on August 16, 2008, he said, "We have to recognize the unique status of marriage between man and woman (but) that doesn't mean that people can't enter into legal agreements."
www.rickwarrennews.com/transcript

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

At a speech to the Planned Parenthood Action Fund, Senator Obama said, "the first thing I'd do as president is sign the Freedom of Choice Act." July 17, 2007, www.imoneinamillion.com (*One Million for Planned Parenthood*) The National Organization of Women website says the bill "would sweep away hundreds of anti-abortion laws" including "conscience" laws that allow health care providers to decline to provide or perform abortions. www.now.org The bill (S. 1173) would invalidate every state and federal limitation on abortion.*

Senator McCain voted in favor of an amendment to the Public Health Services Act in 1996 that prohibits governmental discrimination in the training and licensing of health professionals on the basis of their refusal "to undergo training in the performance of induced abortions, to provide such training, to perform such abortions, or to provide referrals for such training or such abortions."* (NOTE: Senator Obama was not in the U.S. Senate when this legislation was considered.)

STEM CELL RESEARCH

Senator Obama voted for the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act of 2005—a bill that would have allowed federal funding for embryonic stem cell research.* He co-sponsored the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act of 2007, which would allow research on cells derived from embryos donated from in vitro fertilization clinics.* His website says, the "embryos must be deemed in excess and created solely for the purpose of fertility treatment."
www.barackobama.com

Senator McCain voted in favor of the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act in 2005, a bill that would have allowed federal funding for embryonic stem cell research. In 2007 he voted to allow research on cells derived from embryos donated from in vitro fertilization clinics.* His website says he supports adult stem cell research, but is opposed to embryonic stem cell research on cloned embryos and the deliberate creation of embryos for research.
www.johnmccain.com

PENNSYLVANIA ATTORNEY GENERAL

DEMOCRAT



John M. Morganelli

REPUBLICAN



Tom Corbett

What is your position on providing **legal protection for unborn children** from the moment of conception if *Roe v. Wade* is overturned? If *support*, what exceptions, if any, would you require?

MORGANELLI: SUPPORT, *with exception for life of the mother, rape and incest*

CORBETT: SUPPORT, *with exception for life of the mother, rape and incest*

What is your position on Pennsylvania's present law **prohibiting assisted suicide**?

MORGANELLI: SUPPORT

CORBETT: SUPPORT

What is your position on imposing a **moratorium on the death penalty** in Pennsylvania and simultaneously establishing a commission to study how the death penalty is implemented in our Commonwealth?

MORGANELLI: OPPOSE

CORBETT: OPPOSE - *"While I am not opposed to studies, I do not believe that a moratorium is necessary. I believe that the justice system in Pennsylvania is working and imposing a moratorium will open the door for abolishing the death penalty. We still need the death penalty as a deterrent as well as punishment for heinous crimes."*

What is your position on aggressively **defending state law refusing to recognize same-sex "marriages"**?

MORGANELLI: SUPPORT

CORBETT: SUPPORT

What is your position on **vigorously enforcing the current Pennsylvania laws regulating obscenity and pornography**?

MORGANELLI: SUPPORT

CORBETT: SUPPORT

What is your position on defending the constitutionality of a **school choice** program including religious schools?

MORGANELLI: DID NOT INDICATE - *"I would have to see the specific law that would be at issue."*

CORBETT: SUPPORT

What is your position on **legislation or administrative regulation that forces Catholic health care providers to provide, pay for or refer for services contrary to their conscience and moral teachings**?

MORGANELLI: OPPOSE

CORBETT: OPPOSE - *"I am committed to protecting the religious, ethical or moral conscience of individuals as protected by the laws of the Commonwealth and the United States."*

What is your position about legislative proposals to **shift some of the enforcement responsibilities of federal immigration laws to state and local law enforcement authorities**?

MORGANELLI: SUPPORT

CORBETT: DID NOT INDICATE - *"As posed, I cannot answer this question as it is much too broad and does not account for exactly what roles would be shared and how state and local agencies would be funded to fill such a role."*

PENNSYLVANIA AUDITOR GENERAL

DEMOCRAT



Jack Wagner

REPUBLICAN



Chet Beiler

What is your position on providing **legal protection for unborn children** from the moment of conception if *Roe v. Wade* is overturned? If *support*, what exceptions, would you require?

WAGNER: **SUPPORT**, with exception for life of the mother, rape and incest.

BEILER: **SUPPORT**, with exception for life of the mother.

What is your position on allowing the people to amend the Pennsylvania Constitution to **define marriage as the union between one man and one woman** and to prevent legal recognition of civil unions?

WAGNER: **DID NOT INDICATE**, I voted for Act 124 of 1996 because I believe that marriage is between one man and one woman.

BEILER: **SUPPORT**

What is your position on **school choice** legislation in the form of direct grants, or vouchers, to students to attend the school of their choice?

WAGNER: **DID NOT INDICATE**, I am always open-minded about exploring innovative ways to strengthen the quality of education in Pennsylvania. I would want to review the details of such legislation.

BEILER: **SUPPORT**

What is your position on research that involves destroying live human embryos to obtain their cells for experimentation (**embryonic stem cell research**)?

WAGNER: **OPPOSE GENERALLY**, I would want to review the details of such legislation.

BEILER: **OPPOSE**

What is your position on imposing a **moratorium on the death penalty** in Pennsylvania and simultaneously establishing a commission to study how the death penalty is implemented in our Commonwealth?

WAGNER: **OPPOSE** a moratorium, but I am open-minded to finding ways to validate the process of how the death penalty is applied, such as DNA testing.

BEILER: **OPPOSE**

What is your position on legislation that **allows only single individuals or married couples to adopt children**?

WAGNER: **DID NOT INDICATE**, I support children being adopted to a loving home.

BEILER: **SUPPORT**

What is your position on **increasing funding for the Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC)**, which encourages businesses to donate to K-12 scholarship programs?

WAGNER: **SUPPORT**, As a state senator, I voted to create and expand this program and increase its funding. I want to continue to monitor its effectiveness.

BEILER: **SUPPORT**

What is your position on this statement: **The government should assume financial responsibility for providing affordable, accessible health care for the uninsured**?

WAGNER: **DID NOT INDICATE**, I am open-minded to any proposal to expand access to health care for the uninsured in a fiscally responsible way, but would want to review the details of such legislation.

BEILER: **OPPOSE**

What is your position on legislation that would **guarantee comprehensive freedom of conscience** for health care providers and health care institutions?

WAGNER: **SUPPORT GENERALLY**, I would want to review the details of such legislation.

BEILER: **SUPPORT**

What is your position on legislation **requiring employers to provide employee benefits to which they are morally opposed**, for example, mandating health care coverage for contraceptives, if other prescription drugs are covered?

WAGNER: **OPPOSE**, I believe that employers should make these decisions.

BEILER: **OPPOSE**



Faithful Citizenship

"...responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation..." (Faithful Citizenship No. 13)

Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship

*A Call to Political Responsibility from
the Catholic Bishops of the United States*

Read more about the Bishops' statement at

www.faithfulcitizenship.org



Viewpoint is published by the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference, the public affairs agency of Pennsylvania's Catholic bishops. For more information, contact Amy B. Hill, APR, editor, at (717) 238-9613 or email at abhil@pacatholic.org. Visit our website at www.pacatholic.org.

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