

**DO's and DON'Ts for Catholic Institutions**  
from "A Call to Political Responsibility" by the U.S. Catholic Bishops

Parishes, schools, and other Catholic institutions should encourage active participation by voter registration and voter education efforts that are genuinely non-partisan. This kind of religious political responsibility can strengthen our nation and renew our Church.

Individual Catholics are called to be active and informed citizens running for office, participating in political parties and campaigns, and voting for candidates of their choice.

They are part of diocesan legislative networks and a wide variety of community organizations and advocacy groups. The Church as an institution has important but limited roles in the political process. As a tax-exempt organization, the Church is not permitted to engage in partisan activities, support of opposing candidates and parties. These DO's and DON'T 's can help guide an appropriate program of voter education and political responsibility.

**DO**

- Address the moral and human dimension of public issues
- Share Church teaching on human life, human rights, and justice and peace
- Apply Catholic values to legislation and public issues
- Invite all candidates for public office to a church-sponsored public forum, debate, or candidate night
- Conduct a non-partisan voter registration drive on church property
- Distribute unbiased candidate questionnaires covering issues of human life, justice and peace

**DON'T**

- Endorse/oppose candidates for political office
- Distribute partisan campaign literature under church auspices
- Arrange for groups to work for a candidate for public office
- Invite only selected candidates to address your church-sponsored group
- Conduct voter registration slanted toward one party
- Distribute a biased candidate

## **GUIDELINES FOR PARISH INITIATIVE.**

**The following guidelines were proposed for any Archdiocesan wide, parish based initiative.**

**All materials must be sent to the Pastor and the Parish.  
Parish coordinators must check with pastors and the Pastoral assistant or Parish Social Minister or whoever on the parish staff works with the Respect Life Group.  
All Materials should be on the Web site (yet to be developed)**

**The Materials needed include:**

**Clear Instructions for pastor on the materials and how to organize the initiative.  
Letter from the Bishop,  
Bulletin Inserts, which explain the initiative  
Bulletin briefs, Contact parish secretary and insert them for 2 weeks preceding the initiative  
Pulpit Announcement for the Pastor to use the week before and/or on the day  
Contact pastors by fax if time is short  
Gather the letters and mail them over the next several days.**

**If any form of letter writing or post card initiative is involved**

**Arrange with Parish Secretary to reserve a parish hall for use after all masses  
Organize a Donuts for Congress event in the Parish Hall  
provide stationary and pens as need  
Gather letters and mail them over the next several days.**