



CALIFORNIA
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

POLICY ON POLITICAL MATERIALS

The California Catholic Conference policy on political materials that may be distributed in California parishes is as follows:

Only those materials published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, by the California Catholic Conference, by the local diocesan bishop's offices, or an official agency or institution of the Catholic Church such as Catholic Charities or the Alliance of Catholic Health Care may be distributed in the parishes and institutions in California. This policy applies to all types of communication including hardcopy, electronic, social media, email, email lists, audio, video and other means of communications commonly used by parishes.

Other public policy or political materials, even those published by Catholic organizations or Catholic persons, may not be distributed, nor shall such organizations or persons be granted access to our parish facilities to distribute their own literature. As customary; local pastoral discretion is necessary to implement this policy in our parishes and institutions.

We have established this policy for both pastoral and legal reasons.

As bishops and pastors, we are mindful of the fact that our parish churches and facilities are first and foremost places of prayer, reflection, and worship, where we gather as a faith community in the presence of the Lord to direct our thoughts and prayers to spiritual matters, to celebrate the Sacraments of our Church, and to spend time in the presence of the Risen Lord. There is no question that our faith and beliefs should inform our own individual political thinking and activities. Our role as pastors is to educate on matters of faith and morals and invite Catholics to put their faith in action for the common good of the society.

The church has no specifically political mission in the world. Its mission in the political order is to highlight the moral dimensions of policy questions so that believers can exercise their right and responsibility to make judgments as citizens, disciples and voters. Thus, it is especially important for the Church not to engage in partisan promotion or favoritism. No political party or candidate can be said to be Catholic as our faith and our beliefs are far more profound and transcendent than our politics and political processes. For this reason, the Church's prohibition on partisan activities and informational efforts springs primarily from the nature of the Church in the world.

The law expressly prohibits partisan political activities and support of political candidates, direct or indirect, by all non-profit institutions, including specifically our dioceses, parishes, and schools. To be sure, the Church may speak out on the important moral issues of the day—indeed at times, it has an obligation to do so—and may support or oppose the passage of legislation and ballot initiatives. But even these activities are subject to extensive government regulation and oversight. Local dioceses and parishes are not administratively designed to engage in the oversight and monitoring of such activities in a manner that current law requires

As a community of believers, our Catholic faith must animate our common political activities and beliefs. We encourage all Catholics to form their consciences in light of the Gospel and our Catholic Tradition. As faithful citizens of our country and state, we should become involved in the political process and constantly pray for the wisdom and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Please also refer to the *Guidelines Regarding Inclusion of Religious Content in the Church's Regularly Published Periodicals*. More guidance can be found on www.cacatholic.org.