

MARYLAND VOTE 2026

Put your faith into **action.**

2026 Election Toolkit

Resources are online at mdcatholic.org/elections

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MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

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ELECTION GUIDELINES

Maryland Catholic Parishes | 2026

This is a brief overview, not an exhaustive list, of what is and is not allowed regarding political activity and the Catholic Church. Please contact Jenny Kraska, executive director, Maryland Catholic Conference (communications@mdcatholic.org) with questions or if you are unsure about an activity.

1. What kinds of activities are prohibited generally by the IRS under section 501(c)(3)?

Under the rubric "participation in or intervention in any political campaign on behalf of or opposition to any candidate for public office," section 501(c)(3) prohibits a range of activities, generally including:

- statements, in any medium, of support or opposition for any candidate, political party or political action committee (PAC)
- providing or soliciting financial support to or for any candidate, political party or PAC
- soliciting in-kind support to or for any candidate, political party or PAC
- distribution of voter education materials biased with respect to any candidate, political party or PAC
- conducting public forums, debates or lectures biased with respect to any candidate, political party or PAC
- conducting voter registration or get-out-the-vote drives biased with respect to any candidate, political party or PAC

2. May candidates make appearances at Church events?

Whether a Catholic organization may invite a candidate to speak at a sponsored event, per indications from the IRS, depends upon all the facts and circumstances surrounding the invitation and whether the candidate is invited in her capacity as a candidate or in her individual capacity.

Please contact the Maryland Catholic Conference with specific questions on this topic.

A candidate's attendance at an exempt organization-sponsored event that is open to the public, such as a concert, lecture or church picnic, does not by itself

constitute intervention in a political campaign. However, the sponsoring organization should ensure that no political campaigning takes place at the event, including distribution of campaign literature; that the sponsoring organization does not publicly recognize the candidate for public office; and that a nonpartisan atmosphere is maintained.

3. Are political bumper stickers allowed?

Political bumper stickers should not be placed on vehicles owned or leased by Catholic organizations. Section 501(c)(3) does not prohibit the placement of political bumper stickers on the personally owned or leased vehicles of Church officials or employees.

4. Can campaign materials be distributed?

Catholic organizations may not distribute voter education or other campaign or ballot-related materials prepared by any candidate, political party or PAC.

Voter education material approved and/or provided by the Maryland Catholic Conference can and should be distributed in churches.

5. Can signatures be collected for ballot access?

Catholic organizations may not collect signatures on nor encourage voters to sign petitions to enable any candidate to appear on an election ballot. Even if all candidates are treated equally, this activity directly furthers the political candidacies of the individuals involved.

Signatures may be collected at churches in the furtherance of putting an issue on the ballot, **but only with the express permission** of the bishop and/or Maryland Catholic Conference.

continued on next page

Put your faith into action. Join the Maryland Catholic Advocacy Network today.

Archdiocese of Baltimore | Archdiocese of Washington | Diocese of Wilmington | mdcatholic.org | [@mdcatholic](https://twitter.com/mdcatholic)

ELECTION GUIDELINES

Maryland Catholic Parishes | 2026 (page 2 of 2)

6. Can voter education be provided?

During election campaigns, Catholic organizations may educate voters about the issues. In addition, they may educate voters about candidates' positions on the issues through such activities as sponsorship of candidate forums and distribution of voter education materials, e.g., incumbents' voting records or results of candidate polls or questionnaires. Such activities, if unbiased in content, structure, format and context, do not violate the prohibition against political campaign intervention

NOTE: Voter education material approved and/or provided by the Maryland Catholic Conference can and should be distributed in Churches.

7. Can a Catholic organization make endorsements and/or statements of opposition?

A Catholic organization may not directly or indirectly make any statement, in any medium, to endorse, support or oppose any candidate for public office, political party, or PAC. (In some circumstances the Church will take a position on a ballot issue; guidance in this area will come from the Maryland Catholic Conference.)

8. Can financial support be provided to a candidate or political party?

A Catholic organization may not provide or solicit financial support, including even market-rate loans or loan guarantees, for or on behalf of any candidate, political party, or PAC.

9. Can fundraising be conducted on behalf of a candidate or political party?

A Catholic organization should not conduct fundraising events or activities, or otherwise solicit funds, for or on behalf of any candidate, political party, or PAC. Likewise, a Catholic organization should not permit fundraising for or on behalf of any candidate, political party, or PAC at any sponsored event.

10. Can in-kind support be offered to a candidate or political party?

A Catholic organization may not provide or solicit in-kind support, such as free or selective use of volunteers, paid staff, facilities, equipment, office supplies, mailing lists, etc. for or on behalf of any candidate, political party or PAC.

11. Can political signs be placed on Church property?

Political signs should not be placed on property owned by Catholic organizations or rented by Catholic organizations for official business. Section 501(c)(3) does not prohibit the placement of political signs on the personally-owned property of Church officials or employees.

12. Can the Church conduct voter registration/get-out-the-vote drives?

Catholic organizations may sponsor voter registration and get-out-the-vote drives, provided that no bias for or against any candidate, political party or voting position is evidenced. Such bias would be indicated by distribution of partisan literature or materials indicating the sponsoring organization's political viewpoint in connection with the voter registration or get-out-the-vote drive, by targeting registration or get-out-the-vote drives toward individuals who support the organization's positions or a particular candidate or party, or by coordinating the drive with candidates or their committees.

Catholic organization voter registration or get-out-the-vote efforts should not be conducted:

- in cooperation with any political campaign
- according to the identity of the candidates
- in a manner targeting members of a particular party
- based upon a candidate's or party's agreement or disagreement with the sponsoring organization's positions

NOTE: The State of Maryland imposes very specific guidelines for conducting a voter registration drive. If you would like to encourage voter registration at your parish, please contact the Maryland Catholic Conference.



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Flocknote-Bulletin
mdcatholic.org/elections

Discerning Your Vote This Fall

Marylanders will vote this fall for elected officials who will represent them in local, state and Congressional elections. Early voting is Oct. 22-29 and Election Day is Nov. 3. As Catholics it is important to inform your conscience as you discern your vote. The Maryland Catholic Conference has election resources, including links to register to vote, guidelines for Catholic parishes, and candidate survey results at mdcatholic.org/elections.

Register to Vote

As Catholics, we are encouraged to participate in public life, including voting. If you have not registered to vote in Maryland, register for the election now to make sure you can vote. The Maryland Catholic Conference has election resources, including links to register to vote, guidelines for Catholic parishes and candidate survey results online at mdcatholic.org/elections.

We Cannot be "Unengaged Spectators"

Pope Leo XIV reminds us that, especially at a time of rapid change: "We cannot remain as unengaged spectators; rather, we must listen with our hearts, allow ourselves to be challenged, and become involved. With Christ and sustained by the power of His Spirit, believers are called to take on the burdens of their brothers and sisters, especially those who are crushed by injustice, discrimination, and violence." (Sept. 2, 2026) Make a difference for our communities in the upcoming elections as you learn, discern and vote. Resources are available from the Maryland Catholic Conference, mdcatholic.org/elections.

Catholics and Politics

"We need to participate for the common good ... good Catholics immerse themselves in politics by offering the best of themselves so that the leader can govern." (Pope Francis). Form your conscience through your faith, research candidates and vote in the coming election. Visit the Maryland Catholic Conference at mdcatholic.org/elections.

Prudence and Public Life

"In public life, prudence means evaluating policies not by slogans or emotional appeal but by their actual impact on human dignity. It calls voters, leaders, and citizens to ask: What truly serves the most vulnerable? What best promotes justice? What protects the family? What advances peace?" (from Baltimore Archbishop William E. Lori). Discern your vote in the upcoming election with resources for Catholics from the Maryland Catholic Conference at mdcatholic.org/elections.

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General Intercessions

mdcatholic.org/elections

General intercessions for elections and the common good

For the people of the United States, that we may be united in building a society in which everyone can have the opportunity to live with dignity and hope, we pray to the Lord...

For the Church, that we may be a witness to Christ's love by practicing charity and promoting justice and peace throughout the world, we pray to the Lord...

For Catholics throughout Maryland, that the values of our faith may guide us as we exercise our responsibility as voters, we pray to the Lord...

For the members of this community, that we may find ways to help build a world of greater respect for human life and human dignity, we pray to the Lord...

For those who serve in elected office, that they may lead with courage and wisdom, reflecting the Church's teaching that the moral test of our society is how the weak, the poor, and the vulnerable are faring, we pray to the Lord...

Intercesiones para una elección

Por el pueblo de los Estados Unidos, para que podamos estar unidos en la construcción de una sociedad en la que todos puedan tener la oportunidad de vivir con dignidad y esperanza, roguemos al Señor ...

Por la Iglesia, para que podamos ser testigos del amor de Cristo al practicar la caridad y promover la justicia y la paz en todo el mundo, roguemos al Señor Por los católicos en todo Maryland, para que los valores de nuestra fe nos guíen a medida que ejercemos nuestra responsabilidad como votantes, roguemos al Señor ...

Por los miembros de esta comunidad, para que podamos encontrar formas de ayudar a construir un mundo de mayor respeto por la vida y dignidad humana, roguemos al Señor ...

Por aquellos que sirven en cargos electos, para que puedan liderar con valentía y sabiduría, reflejando la enseñanza de la Iglesia de que la prueba moral de nuestra sociedad es cómo les está yendo a los débiles, los pobres y los vulnerables, roguemos al Señor ...

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Quotes

mdcatholic.org/elections

"No one can demand that religion should be relegated to the inner sanctum of personal life, without influence on societal and national life, without concern for the soundness of civil institutions, without a right to offer an opinion on events affecting society." (Evangelii Gaudium, 2013)

"We cannot remain as unengaged spectators; rather, we must listen with our hearts, allow ourselves to be challenged, and become involved." (Pope Leo XIV, 9/3/2026)

"We need to participate for the common good. Sometimes we hear: a good Catholic is not interested in politics. This is not true: good Catholics immerse themselves in politics by offering the best of themselves so that the leader can govern." (Pope Francis, Morning Meditation, 9/16/2013)

"It is necessary that all participate, each according to his position and role, in promoting the common good. This obligation is inherent in the dignity of the human person." (Catechism, 1913)

"As far as possible citizens should take an active part in political life." Citizens have the right, and at times the duty, to speak up on policy issues that impact human dignity and the common good. (Catechism, 1915 and 2238)

We have not only a right, but an obligation to vote. "Submission to authority and coresponsibility for the common good make it morally obligatory...to exercise the right to vote." (Catechism, 2240)

"In the Catholic Tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation. This obligation is rooted in our baptismal commitment to follow Jesus Christ and to bear Christian witness in all we do." (Faithful Citizenship, 13)

We have a responsibility to follow our conscience when voting and engaging in public life, but we first have the responsibility to correctly form our consciences "in accord with human reason and the teaching of the Church." (Faithful Citizenship, 17)

Our conscience is not merely a "feeling" about what we should do, and should never be a justification for doing whatever we want. Rather, "conscience is the voice of God resounding in the human heart, revealing the truth to us." (Faithful Citizenship, 17)

Forming our consciences is a 3-part process. First, we must genuinely seek the truth by studying Scripture and the teachings of the Church. Second, we must educate ourselves about the facts of a situation. Third, we must pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. (Faithful Citizenship, 18)

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Additional Election Resources

mdcatholic.org/elections

Maryland Candidate Surveys

The Maryland Catholic Conference surveyed candidates for the primary elections and invited non-responders to complete online surveys for this fall's general election.

Responses are posted in online tables at mdcatholic.org/elections-surveys. If candidates in your district have not responded, please let them know their participation matters to you. They can contact the Maryland Catholic Conference at communications@mdcatholic.org for the survey.

USCCB (mdcatholic.org/parish-elections)

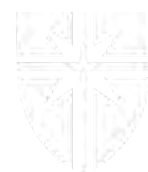
Faithful Citizenship (click below to open)

- [Novena for Faithful Citizenship | Spanish](#)
- [Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship | en español](#)
- [Bulletin inserts:](#)
 - [Introductory Note | en español](#)
 - [The Role of the Church in American Political Life | en español](#)
 - [The Dignity of the Human Person | en español](#)
 - [The Common Good | en español](#)
 - [Solidarity | en español](#)
 - [Subsidiarity | en español](#)

Civilize It (click here and the links below for the resources)

Pledge and resources for a less polarized society.

- [Prayer for Unity, to Overcome Division](#)
- [Prayer for Civility](#)
- [Scripture Meditation: Pope Francis and the Parable of the Good Samaritan](#)
- [5 Tips from Pope Francis for "a Better Kind of Politics"](#)
- [Reflection on "a Better Kind of Politics"](#)
- [Examination of Conscience](#)
- [Following Pope Francis: Dialogue in *Fratelli Tutti*](#)
- [Loving our Neighbor through Dialogue](#)
- [Skills for Dialogue](#)
- [Civilize It: A Better Kind of Politics Promotion Packet](#)



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Prayer Before An Election

usccb.org/prayers/prayer-election

Lord God, as the election approaches,
we seek to better understand the issues and concerns that confront our
city/state/country,
and how the Gospel compels us to respond as faithful citizens in our community.

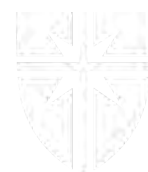
We ask for eyes that are free from blindness
so that we might see each other as brothers and sisters,
one and equal in dignity,
especially those who are victims of abuse and violence, deceit and poverty.

We ask for ears that will hear the cries of children unborn and those abandoned,
Men and women oppressed because of race or creed, religion or gender.

We ask for minds and hearts that are open to hearing the voice of leaders who will bring
us closer to your Kingdom.

We pray for discernment
so that we may choose leaders who hear your Word,
live your love,
and keep in the ways of your truth
as they follow in the steps of Jesus and his Apostles
and guide us to your Kingdom of justice and peace.

We ask this in the name of your Son Jesus Christ and through the power of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.



Oración para Antes de Unas Elecciones

usccb.org/es/prayers/oracion-para-antes-de-unas-elecciones

Señor Dios,
a medida que se acercan las elecciones,
buscamos entender mejor los temas y preocupaciones que afronta nuestra ciudad/nuestro estado/nuestro país,
y cómo el Evangelio nos apremia a responder a estos retos como ciudadanos fieles de nuestra comunidad.

Te pedimos que nuestros ojos no sufran de ceguera
para que así podamos ver a los demás como hermanos y hermanas nuestros,
quienes gozan de una dignidad que nos une y nos hace iguales.
De manera especial te pedimos que reconozcamos como hermanos y hermanas
a quienes son víctimas de abusos y de la violencia, de los engaños y de la pobreza.

Te pedimos que nuestros oídos escuchen el llanto de los niños aún no nacidos y de quienes han sido abandonados,
que escuchemos el llanto de los hombres y mujeres que son oprimidos a causa de su raza o credo, religión o género.

Te pedimos para que nuestra mente y nuestro corazón estén abiertos a escuchar la voz de los líderes que nos acercan cada vez más a tu Reino.

Te pedimos por el don del discernimiento
para que elijamos líderes que escuchan tu Palabra,
viven en tu amor
y caminan por la senda de tu verdad,
a medida que siguen el camino de Jesús y sus Apóstoles
y nos guían hacia tu Reino de paz y justicia.

Te lo pedimos por tu Hijo Jesucristo, a través del poder del Espíritu Santo,
Amén.



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Graphics
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Put your faith
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Learn about candidates,
inform your conscience,
and **vote.**

MARYLAND
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QR code to Maryland Catholic Conference election resources

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Pon tu fe en
acción.

¡Infórmate sobre los
candidatos, forma tu
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VOTACIÓN DE
MARYLAND 2026



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Código QR para acceder a los recursos electorales de la Conferencia Católica de Maryland

VOTACIÓN DE MARYLAND 2026

Pon tu fe en **acción.**

