

## **ABORTION & DEATH PENALTY**

*In Ohio there is a prohibition on using public monies to support abortions. Ohio also requires parental consent prior to abortion for minors and informed consent for adults. Ohio recently passed a law requiring licensure of abortion clinics and state compliance with federal RU 486 restrictions.*

*Ohio has 205 men and 1 woman on death row. Many are in their last stages of appeals. Ohio has executed ten persons in the past five years. Legislation has been introduced to establish a study commission regarding Ohio's death penalty*

**Where does the candidate stand on protecting unborn children?**

**Where does the candidate stand on the death penalty and a moratorium on executions in Ohio?**

## **EDUCATION**

*The Ohio General Assembly has been very responsive in the past to providing assistance for pupils attending chartered non-public schools. Funding has been provided in such areas as school transportation, administrative support, textbooks, computers and teacher training. The Catholic Conference advocates that Ohio funding for auxiliary and administrative reimbursement be increased by the same percentage as the basic foundation funding for public schools.*

**Where does the candidate stand on the rights of parents to choose the educational setting for their children and the state's obligation to provide the means to exercise that right?**

## **HEALTH CARE**

*The issue of affordable prescription drugs and medical inflation remains ongoing concerns. Ohio recently passed two bills establishing discount programs for prescription drugs: Ohio's Best Rx and the Golden Buckeye Card Program.*

*Ohio also provides health care coverage through Medicaid to working families. There is fear among advocates that such coverage may be scaled back due to budget constraints.*

**Where does the candidate stand on affordable prescription drugs, and health care coverage for impoverished children and families?**

## **IMMIGRANTS**

*Ohio has a growing number of Hispanic immigrant workers recruited by businesses to labor year round in industries such as food processing plants, plastic factories, lumber mills, and landscape nurseries. Many immigrants are undocumented and Catholic.*

*The Ohio Bishops have established a statewide project entitled "**We Gather and Stand Together**" to minister to these workers.*

**Where does the candidate stand on support for Hispanic immigrants, both documented and undocumented?**

**Would the candidate support establishing state procedures for obtaining drivers licenses, insurance and banking accounts for immigrant workers?**

## **POOR & HOMELESS**

*Poverty relief programs such as support for **Food Banks and School Feeding programs** are vulnerable to budget cuts. Ohio's **Housing Support Programs** that provide help to many in need of affordable and safe housing are in need of additional monies.*

**Where does the candidate stand on providing assistance and services to the poor and vulnerable members of our society?**

## **TAX REFORM**

*Taxation is both an economic and moral issue. Ohio is facing extreme budget constraints. School funding remains tenuous.*

*The Ohio Bishops support tax reform that is fair, raises adequate revenues, is progressive, and mitigates the impact on persons with fixed and low incomes.*

**Where does the candidate stand on Ohio tax reform?**

**CATHOLIC CONFERENCE OF OHIO**  
9 E LONG ST. COLUMBUS, OH 43215  
614-224-7147 [www.ohiocathconf.org](http://www.ohiocathconf.org)





## **CATHOLIC FRAMEWORK FOR JUST TAX REFORM**

*Legislative leaders in Ohio are considering ways to revise the current tax codes. Taxation is a moral issue. The economic and tax policies that constitute our state budget derive from moral considerations. All of our collective acts of charity are not a substitute for what the public sector can accomplish through the just collection and distribution of tax monies.*

*The Catholic Bishops in Ohio have issued a statement encouraging comprehensive and bipartisan reform of Ohio's tax system. Realizing that tax reform is complex and politically difficult, the Bishops offer encouragement, moral principles, and questions for elected officials to consider. People of good will can agree or disagree on the application of these principles as to public policy. The overarching concern is that sufficient revenues be available to serve the common good of society, especially those persons most in need.*

### **SPECIAL OPTION FOR THE POOR AND VULNERABLE**

In our pastoral statement, *Economic Justice For All*, we said, "the obligation to provide justice for all means that the poor have the single most urgent economic claim on the conscience of the nation." Such teaching affirms that the moral test of any society is how it treats its most vulnerable members. Decisions should be judged in light of what they do for the poor, what they do to the poor, and what they enable the poor to do for themselves.

### **TAXATION PRINCIPLES**

**First**, the tax system should raise adequate revenues to pay for the public needs of society, especially to meet the basic needs of the poor. Elected officials have a moral responsibility to be good stewards of such funds.

**Second**, the tax system should be structured according to the principle of progressivity, so that those with the greatest financial resources pay a greater portion of taxes.

**Third**, families whose earnings do not provide them with poverty level subsistence should not be required to pay income taxes.

### **QUESTIONS**

Does Ohio's tax structure adequately protect the poor, vulnerable children, seniors and the disabled? Are Ohio's tax policies sufficiently progressive, intentionally designed to collect more from those with a greater ability to pay? Is Ohio's tax code fair to all taxpayers? Do low and middle-income families bear a disproportionate tax burden? Are there tax loopholes that can be modified or closed? Do our tax policies serve the common good of Ohioans?

### **PARTICIPATE**

A fair and bipartisan reform of our tax system ought to be a high priority of all elected officials. Tax reform should enhance economic opportunity and job creation while securing sufficient funds to serve the common needs of society, especially those who are poor and vulnerable. Communicate your concerns by contacting the Governor, your State Representative and Senator.

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# Made in His Image

## 2004 Respect Life Program

### Special Diocesan Order Form for "Respect Life Month"

In the past, our Diocese has always provided this resource free of charge to all parishes and organizations. However, less than half of all recipients of this publication within the diocese have utilized this resource in recent years. Therefore, in the spirit of proper stewardship, the Pro Life Office will be offering the 2004 October Respect Life Packet from the Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities in Washington, D.C. for the nominal fee of \$6.25. To insure that you will receive this valuable resource in time for parish planning, please fill in the order blank below and mail it with the total cost to:

**Pro Life Office  
Respect Life Program  
Catholic Charities Parish Services  
7911 Detroit Avenue  
Cleveland, Ohio 44102**

**Name of  
Parish/Organization:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Professional Staff Member  
Authorizing Purchase:** \_\_\_\_\_

Please Print

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

**Mailing Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**No. of Packets:** \_\_\_\_\_

Limit of 2 per parish/organization.

**Total Cost:** \_\_\_\_\_

The cost of \$6.25 includes six articles (each of which includes program models and resources), 2 posters (English/Spanish back-to-back), one flier each in English and Spanish, liturgy guide, clip art, catalog, shipping and handling. Due to the "special parish kit price" allotted for our diocese, requests exceeding our 300-unit limit may incur additional costs.

## No Place to Stand?

*When you're Christian, progressive, and "pro-life,"  
voting your conscience is often easier said than done.*

by Heidi Schlumpf

(as printed in the June 2004 edition of *Sojourners magazine*)

*What does it mean to be "pro-life"? For some, the term is understood very narrowly as the opposition to abortion, particularly through legal sanction. Others are committed to reducing the number of abortions, truly making them rare, but favor policies that don't criminalize abortion—and prosecute women and/or their doctors—to do so. And as U. S. Catholic's Heidi Schlumpf explains in this article, many people, on both sides of the legality question, see a genuinely pro-life stance as one that embraces respect for the human person at every stage—a position that's hard to find in today's polarized politics, and one that cries out for broad (and civil) dialogue across our various divides. —The Editors*

It's an election year, and once again Jennifer Roth is wondering if she might as well flip a coin. The 31-year-old systems administrator is one of those "swing voters" who could go either way—a demographic highly coveted by both Democrats and Republicans as the key to winning in 2004. But neither the Dems nor the GOP does much to inspire or excite Roth.

The problem? Roth is a self-described liberal on nearly all issues except one: Abortion. It's a view that she—and countless other "pro-life progressives"—finds entirely consistent. "In my view liberalism is all about looking out for the little guy, the people who don't have power, money, or protection," she says.

But where does that leave her when it comes to the political process? Well, left out—not coincidentally, "Leftout" is the name of the Web site (not affiliated with a faith perspective) that Roth created in 1997 as a "haven for progressive pro-lifers" to help them "feel a little less like the only Martian on your block." The community created by "Leftout" has perhaps helped alleviate that sense of isolation, but it hasn't exactly resulted in an explosion of pro-life progressive candidates on U.S. ballots.

So pro-life progressives are forced to make compromises, often major ones. In some elections, Roth has voted for a write-in candidate as a protest. Other years, she shops around for a moderate Republican or a Democrat who's at least open to seriously considering the abortion issue. When in doubt, she tends toward the Democratic Party, believing its social agenda is more likely to decrease the social and economic pressure that leads to abortion.

"I don't think it's an accident that the abortion rate went up under Reagan and Bush but went down under Clinton," she says. "We have to integrate parenthood and school or parenthood and work to relieve some of the social and economic pressures that make abortion feel like the only choice."

Having to compromise by voting for a less-than-fully-pro-life candidate may not be ideal for socially conscious Christians, but it is unfortunately the reality in American politics. "In a perfect world, all public officials would be pro-life in the full meaning of that term," says Tom Allio, senior director for the Cleveland Diocese's Social Action Office. In his 27 years in that position, he has yet to meet a candidate who fits that bill.

Being a fully pro-life candidate, according to Allio and others, doesn't mean just promising to work to make abortion illegal, supporting laws against certain procedures, or pledging to pack the Supreme Court to one day overturn *Roe vs. Wade*. (And for

some, it means using methods other than legal sanctions to reduce abortions.) While some pro-life politicians take the so-called “seamless garment” approach, adding assisted suicide, the death penalty, and perhaps stem-cell research to the abortion issue, progressive pro-lifers tend to see the issue even more broadly than that.

“To be pro-life means also to work to eradicate poverty, to provide universal health care, to provide affordable housing, to be consistent on war and peace,” says Allio, whose office works on precisely those issues.

Over at the Diocese of Davenport, Iowa, Dan Ebener heads up a similar social action office—and the pro-life office as well. The doubled job is not the result of budget cutbacks but rather an intentional effort by the diocese to link the pro-life issue with broader social ones.

“Catholic social teaching values the life and dignity of the human person. And you can’t separate the life and the dignity; they go together,” Ebener says. That means considering not only abortion but also poverty, health care, and joblessness.

“To me it’s important to defend life where it’s most vulnerable, and certainly life in the womb is vulnerable,” he says. “But protecting human life from abortion is only one way of protecting life in the womb.” To Ebener, issues such as prenatal health care, job training for unemployed mothers, and day care for working mothers are as essential to a pro-life agenda as is fighting abortion.

It is on precisely those other issues that the Republican Party—typically seen as more “pro-life”—loses its credibility among progressive pro-lifers. A common summary of the GOP’s philosophy by its opponents is that Republicans only care about the baby in utero. After birth, mom and baby are on their own.

“Republicans who claim to be pro-life also often have anti-life policies that are completely in collusion with the social and economic structures that compel abortion,” says Kevin Clarke, editor of *Salt of the Earth*, a Catholic social justice e-zine.

Not only do Republicans have a spotty, at best, record on the broader social issues that contribute to abortion, they also have accomplished little on the promises they do make, leading some to wonder if they’re not all talk, little action.

“The Republican approach to abortion makes for a nice election issue,” says Ebener. “We hear a lot of rhetoric, but when it comes to actually taking action, what has happened in the last three years with a Republican Senate and White House?”

With the partial-birth abortion ban, which took nearly a decade to pass, as this administration’s only pro-life accomplishment, Ebener is not impressed—especially since it was accompanied by plenty of other “anti-life” legislation such as social spending cuts paired with tax cuts for the wealthy.

Yet most pro-life groups working primarily to end abortion tend to side with the Republican Party, if for no other reason than at least they’re saying the right things. Republicans also tend to share pro-life activists’ worldview that rallies against the prevailing secular “culture of death.”

But many pro-life progressives find fault with such a single-issue focus, especially when religious organizations use that issue as a litmus test for everything from deciding who can speak at parishes and schools to withholding the sacraments from politicians.

“We are not a single-issue church,” says Allio. “Anyone who would say one issue is all the litmus test that’s needed is being guided by something other than Catholic social teaching. Our church does not keep a voters’ scorecard.”

The U.S. Catholic bishops’ recent statement “Faithful Citizenship: A Catholic Call to Political Responsibility” definitely incorporates the broader scope of those teachings. Still, the misperception persists that Catholics must vote for self-described “pro-life” candidates, thanks in part to pro-life activists who imply that those who don’t vote for these candidates are somehow not “pro-life.” Allio also believes it’s a myth that the key to the Catholic vote is a hard-line opposition to abortion, citing an ABC/Beliefnet poll that shows only 19 percent of Catholics believe abortion should be illegal in all cases.

On the other side of the aisle, progressive pro-lifers also have a problem, albeit a different one. “The Democrats have really sold out. They have no credibility on the pro-life issue,” says Ebener of Davenport, who like many regrets that the party that pledges to protect the little guy doesn’t include the littlest of all—the unborn.

“It’s just a real shame this issue has been hijacked,” says Kristen Day, executive director of Democrats for Life of America, an organization for pro-life Dems who oppose abortion, capital punishment, and euthanasia.

The Democrats have reframed the issue as one of “choice,” seeing themselves as feminists committed to rights for women. It doesn’t help when some adamant pro-lifers come off as caring more about the baby’s rights than about those of the mother. But plenty of progressive pro-lifers put themselves solidly in the feminist camp, and they believe that abortion has not exactly been a positive thing for women.

“We have to make a better case for why abortion is not a good choice for women, why it is not liberating for women, why it actually oppresses women,” says Clarke of *Salt of the Earth*. “By focusing only on whether abortion is legal or not, we ignore all the other cultural structures that drive women toward abortion.”

To hear the pro-choice lobby talk, it would seem the only choice in an unplanned pregnancy is abortion. Pro-life feminists and other pro-life progressives, on the other hand, would like to offer women real choices—economic ones like paid parenting leave or cultural ones like less shame and guilt for pregnant teens.

Another group lacking in real choices are pro-life Democrats, who seemingly are pressured by the party to get in line with the pro-choice position. The near unanimity of the pro-choice view within the Democratic Party was evidenced this year by the presidential primary options: Not one was pro-life, in the narrowest sense of the term. (Richard Gephardt did vote for the partial birth abortion ban.)

Even Dennis Kucinich, who previously had included defense for unborn life among his liberal agenda, flip-flopped on the issue. He’s not the only one: The list of formerly pro-life Democrats includes Jesse Jackson, Presidents Bill Clinton and Jimmy Carter, and Vice President Al Gore.

Those Democrats who stick to their pro-life beliefs—many are on the Democrats for Life advisory board—face marginalization and even outright opposition. Not much has changed since the late Pennsylvania Democratic Gov. Robert Casey, as the head of the fifth-largest state in the nation, was twice denied permission to address the Democratic Convention because of his pro-life views. Even today, Democrats for Life

has not yet convinced the Democratic National Committee to link them to the DNC Web site.

Some think that the amount of pressure brought to bear on Democrats belies the diversity of views within the party. “It’s telling,” says Roth of “Leftout.” “And it’s got to crash eventually.”

Given the limitations of each party, it’s hard to blame pro-life progressives’ temptation to stay home and throw their hands up in frustration. Polls show that a sizeable number of pro-life Democrats voted for Bush in 2000, although few expect a repeat of that in 2004, given other issues such as the economy and the war in Iraq.

Most will have to make a compromise decision they can live with. “The perfect candidate doesn’t exist,” says Allio. “Therefore the best a (Christian) voter can do is become fully informed and make the best prudential judgment they can.”

Meanwhile, both the pro-life and pro-choice lobbies continue with their all-or-nothing rhetoric that further polarizes the debate—and politicians pander to their constituents on either side. “In an election year the abortion issue is used in such a targeted way to solidify one’s base, whether it’s pro-life or pro-choice,” says Allio. “That just doesn’t do justice to the problem.”

He and other pro-life progressives believe any solution must begin with finding some common group between the two sides. Religious progressives who are pro-life are the perfect people to start that conversation, Allio believes, because they have solid pro-life credentials as well as contacts in the secular liberal community because of their work on other justice issues.

Clarke agrees: “The one thing we could do is to reintroduce a respectful dialogue on abortion into the political culture,” he says. “We have to develop a way to talk about this issue where we’re not at each other’s throats.”

While politicians continue with business as usual, many pro-life progressives are looking for solutions outside electoral politics. “Part of a pro-life philosophy ought to be creating an alternative to abortion and helping women who find themselves in a ‘problem’ pregnancy,” says Allio.

Roth of “Leftout” dreams of creating a kind of “pro-life Planned Parenthood,” where sex education, contraception, and counseling would be available without promoting abortion. She’d like to see pro-life progressives think proactively and creatively rather than just complain about their lack of political choices.

“If Roe (vs. Wade) were overturned tomorrow, I think we would see at least another 32 years of wrangling about abortion,” Roth says. “Because it wouldn’t be by a consensus that the unborn have value. That’s what we really need.”

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# **R U 4 LIFE flag**

*Sponsored by R U 4 LIFE, a nonprofit organization that is a pro-life activity group from the Akron area with unique ideas and talents that make a difference.*

**As all life is God-given and precious, we fly this banner as a statement of that truth. And we call upon our fellow Americans to join us in protecting those who are weakest among us—the unborn, the infirmed and the aged.**

*Every minute four children die from abortion. Every day countless others are threatened with death by infanticide and euthanasia. The killing will continue unless we take a stand for life. Together, we can save lives through your contribution of treasure, time and talent.*

**The 18 x 23 inch flag contains the pro-life rose in red and green on a white background growing out of the word LIFE written below. White represents innocence. Green represents hope. Red represents blood shed. *Simple. Powerful.***

**Your parish or organization could make a statement of solidarity by displaying this flag publicly as a witness to and bearer of life.**

For more information on obtaining this banner, contact: Mary: 330-678-3425, email: [tefeather@netzero.com](mailto:tefeather@netzero.com) or Martha: 330-922-0986, email: [neuro222@hotmail.com](mailto:neuro222@hotmail.com)