

# Know the Positions of the Presidential Candidates

In keeping with its mission, the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference (PCC) aims to educate and inform Catholics about a wide range of issues. The information listed here has been compiled from policies, public statements, official and campaign websites and other resources to help voters form their consciences before entering the voting booth. The issues that appear here do not represent a complete list of issues that may be of importance to Catholics. The PCC neither supports nor opposes any candidate for public office.

Any politics of human dignity must seriously address issues of racism, poverty, hunger, employment, education, housing, and health care. Therefore, Catholics should eagerly involve themselves as advocates for the weak and marginalized in all these areas...*But being 'right' in such matters can never excuse a wrong choice regarding direct attacks on innocent human life.* Indeed, the failure to protect and defend life in its most vulnerable stages renders suspect any claims to the 'rightness' of positions in other matters affecting the poorest and least powerful of the human community. If we understand the human person as the 'temple of the Holy Spirit' -- the living house of God -- then these latter issues fall logically into place as the crossbeams and walls of that house. *All direct attacks on innocent human life, such as abortion and euthanasia, strike at the house's foundation.* These directly and immediately violate the human person's most fundamental right -- the right to life. -- From *Living the Gospel of Life*, No. 22 with original emphasis (Pastoral Statement of the U.S. Catholic Bishops, 1998).



**DEMOCRAT**  
**Hillary Clinton**



**REPUBLICAN**  
**Donald Trump**



## ABORTION

"I believe we need to protect access to safe and legal abortion, not just in principle but in practice," [Clinton said](#) at a rally in January.

[Clinton supports](#) the repeal of the Hyde Amendment and the [Democratic Party Platform](#) states, "We will continue to oppose—and seek to overturn—federal and state laws and policies that impede a woman's access to abortion, including by repealing the Hyde Amendment." The Hyde Amendment restricts the use of federal funds to pay for abortions.

While Trump previously described himself as "pro-choice," in August 2015 [Trump said](#) he has "very much evolved" on the issue of abortion and "I am pro-life." [He said](#) he supports exceptions in the case of rape, incest and when the life of the mother is at risk.

No statement by Trump on the Hyde Amendment could be found, but the [Republican Party Platform](#) calls for "codification" of the Hyde Amendment, "We call for a permanent ban on federal funding and subsidies for abortion and healthcare plans that include abortion coverage."

## DEATH PENALTY

During a February 2016 debate, [Clinton said](#) regarding the death penalty, "I do for very limited, particularly heinous crimes, believe it is an appropriate punishment, but I deeply disagree with the way that too many states still are implementing it."

In 2011, [Trump said](#) he is "very much in favor of the death penalty."

## DOCTOR PRESCRIBED SUICIDE

During a February Town Hall Meeting, [Clinton said](#) doctor prescribed suicide "is a crucial issue that people deserve to understand from their own ethical, religious, faith-based perspective...I want as president to try to catalyze that debate." The [Democratic Party Platform](#) makes no mention of doctor prescribed suicide.

No statement by Trump on this issue could be found, but the [Republican Party Platform](#) states, "We oppose euthanasia and assisted suicide."

## EDUCATIONAL CHOICE

In 2007, [Clinton said](#), "I'll tell you why I won't support vouchers. Number one, I don't think they're constitutional. But number two, I don't see how you would implement them without having a lot of people get vouchers for schools that would be teaching things antithetical to American values."

In his book *The America We Deserve* (2000), [Trump wrote](#), "we've got to bring on the competition—open the schoolhouse doors and let parents choose the best school for their children. Education reformers call this school choice, charter schools, vouchers, even opportunity scholarships. I call it competition—the American way."

These comments, policies and statements are snapshots from each candidate's public career, campaigns and websites as of August 2016. For embedded links to these resources, visit [www.pacatholic.org](http://www.pacatholic.org). The candidates also represent the platforms of their political parties, which can be viewed at [www.democrats.org](http://www.democrats.org) and [www.gop.com](http://www.gop.com). Information appears here for informational purposes only and does not represent a complete list of issues that may be of importance to Catholics. PCC neither supports nor opposes any candidate for public office.

**HILLARY CLINTON****DONALD TRUMP****ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Clinton's campaign [website](#) states that her energy "plan is designed to deliver on the pledge President Obama made at the Paris climate conference" where over 190 countries agreed to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions and meet existing financial commitments to an international climate fund.

During a May 2016 policy address on energy, [Trump said](#) that in his first 100 days in office, "We're going to cancel the Paris Climate Agreement and stop all payments of U.S. tax dollars to U.N. global warming programs."

**FREEDOM OF RELIGION**

[Clinton described](#) the First Amendment Defense Act as "taxpayer-funded discrimination by those who cite religion as a reason to deny services to LGBT people nationwide." The First Amendment Defense Act would protect against adverse federal actions directed toward individuals and organizations whose religious beliefs and moral convictions indicate that marriage is between one man and one woman.

In a December 2015 letter [Trump wrote](#), "If Congress considers the First Amendment Defense Act a priority, then I will do all I can to make sure it comes to my desk for signature and enactment."

**HEALTH CARE ACCESS FOR THE UNINSURED**

According to [her website](#), Clinton will "defend the Affordable Care Act and build on it to slow the growth of out-of-pocket costs." Her plan would also provide health insurance for the lowest-income Americans by incentivizing states to expand Medicaid, and make enrollment through Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act easier.

According to [his website](#), Trump "will ask Congress to immediately deliver a full repeal of Obamacare." He also said, "As we allow the free market to provide insurance coverage opportunities to companies and individuals, we must also make sure that no one slips through the cracks simply because they cannot afford insurance. We must review basic options for Medicaid and work with states to ensure that those who want healthcare coverage can have it."

**IMMIGRATION**

According to [her website](#), Clinton will "introduce comprehensive immigration reform with a pathway to full and equal citizenship within her first 100 days in office." She will "defend President Obama's executive actions" to provide deportation relief for DREAMers and parents of citizens and lawful residents; "end family detention and close private immigrant detention centers" and "promote naturalization."

According to [his website](#), Trump will build a wall across the southern border, paid for by Mexico. To defend the immigration laws, Trump proposes to triple the number of ICE officers (currently 5,000); create a nationwide e-verify to "protect jobs for unemployed Americans"; return "criminal aliens" to their home countries; detain "illegal aliens" at the border until they are returned to their home countries; defund "sanctuary cities"; enhance penalties for overstaying a visa; cooperate with local gang task forces and end birthright citizenship.

**INTERNATIONAL SECURITY**

According to [her website](#), Clinton will defeat ISIS by "intensifying the coalition air campaign against ISIS fighters, leaders, and infrastructure; stepping up support for local Arab and Kurdish forces on the ground and coalition efforts to protect civilians; and pursuing a diplomatic strategy aimed at resolving Syria's civil war and Iraq's sectarian conflict between Sunnis and Shias—both of which have contributed to the rise of ISIS."

[Trump said](#) he would bring about the defeat of ISIS by destroying the source of its funding, oil and banks that funnel money to the organization, "take the oil...the oil that ISIS is pumping, where they're getting tremendous amounts of revenue. I've said, hit the banking channels. You know, they have very sophisticated banking channels... they're taking in tremendous amounts of money from banking channels."

**MARRIAGE**

In response to the Supreme Court's decision to strike down state laws defining marriage as between one man and one women, [Clinton tweeted](#), "Proud to celebrate a historic victory for marriage equality."

In 2015, [Trump said](#), "I'm (for) traditional marriage."

**POVERTY**

In 2013 while members of Congress were debating the details of the Farm Bill, [Clinton tweeted](#), "What happens to kids in families cut from unemployment insurance & food stamps? They're #2SmallToFail, & deserve an equal chance to succeed."

In a June 2015 interview, [Trump said](#), "We have to create incentives that they actually do much better by working. Right now, they have a disincentive. They have an incentive not to work." When asked if he would insist people work for food stamps and other welfare assistance, Trump said, "Well, you could - you could start looking at things like that...The problem we have right now, we have a society that sits back and says we're not going to do anything. And eventually the 50 percent cannot carry, and it's unfair to them, but cannot carry the other 50 percent."

**REFUGEES DISPLACED BY TERRORISM**

[Clinton said](#) the U.S. should do more to help Syrian refugees, "We're facing the worst refugee crisis since the end of World War II...I think the United States has to do more, and I'd like to see us move from what is a good start with 10,000 to 65,000 [refugees permitted in the U.S.]"

[Trump said](#) regarding refugees, "It is a very, very disturbing thing that's going on in Europe. And we're going to have it over here, too. And they just can't do what they're doing...We're not going to keep them here. They're going back."