

# VOTER GUIDE

## On the issues: McCain, Obama, and the Church



The 2008 presidential election is more than just an opportunity to get the essential “I voted” sticker. For Catholics, it is part of our moral obligation to participate in political life.

Describing responsible citizenship as a virtue, the U.S. Catholic bishops released the reflection, *The Challenges of Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, not to tell Catholics for whom to vote, but rather,

how they should come to an informed decision about which candidate to support.

“We do not tell Catholics how to vote,” the bishops wrote in the 2007 document. “The responsibility to make political choices rests with each person and his or her properly formed conscience.”

To get your conscience in proper Election Day shape, the bishops recommend the following: coming to know and under-

stand the Scriptures and teachings of the Church, becoming informed about the facts of any given issue, and praying for divine guidance.

*Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* is available at [www.faithfulcitizenship.org](http://www.faithfulcitizenship.org)

For the full version of the Wisconsin Catholic Conference’s Faithful Citizenship 2008, visit [www.wisconsinatholic.org](http://www.wisconsinatholic.org)

ISSUES	JOHN MCCAIN (REP)		BARACK OBAMA (DEM)		THE CATHOLIC CHURCH 
<b>RIGHT TO LIFE</b> 	Overturn Roe vs. Wade.		Supports a woman’s right to choose. Will preserve women’s rights under Roe vs. Wade and supports expanded access to contraception, health information, and preventive services to reduce unwanted pregnancies.		“Oppose abortion, physician assisted suicide, and euthanasia which are preeminent threats to human life and dignity because they directly attack life itself.”
<b>STEM CELL RESEARCH</b> 	Opposes the intentional creation of human embryos for research purposes. Voted to make it a federal crime for researchers to use cells or fetal tissue from an embryo created for research purposes.		Promotes embryonic stem cell research. Cosponsor of legislation that would allow research on more stem cells derived from embryos donated for in vitro fertilization. Introduced legislation in Illinois Senate that only embryos that would be discarded could be used and donors must provide written consent.		“Oppose embryonic stem cell research and human cloning because it destroys human life at its earliest and most tender stage.”
<b>THE WAR IN IRAQ</b> 	Leading advocate of the surge in Iraq. Will keep troops in Iraq until Iraqi forces can safeguard their own country.		Opposes Iraq war. Supporter of phased redeployment. Press for a regional compact that secures Iraq’s borders. Maintain a residual U.S. presence in Iraq/region for force protection, training of Iraqi security forces and counterterrorism operations.		“Promote peace and avoid war. Support a ‘responsible transition’ in Iraq that reallocates resources from war to the urgent needs of the poor.”
<b>MARRIAGE</b> 	Believes the institution of marriage is a union between one man and one woman.		Opposes a constitutional ban on same-sex marriage. Supports full civil unions that give same-sex couples equal legal rights and privileges as married couples.		“Protect marriage as a lifelong commitment between a man and woman.”
<b>IMMIGRATION</b> 	Will secure border through tight security of entry and exit of people and the effective screening of cargo at ports and points of entry.		Reform immigration system by providing path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, secure border, fix broken immigration bureaucracy. Fight for reform that prioritizes keeping families together and improving HI-B visa program.		“Adopt a more humane immigration and refugee policy based on promoting family reunification; providing temporary or permanent safe haven for those in need; protecting immigrant workers from exploitation; and safeguarding the right of all peoples to return to their homelands.”
<b>HEALTH CARE</b> 	Use competition to improve the quality of health insurance to match people’s needs, lower prices and portability. Every family will receive a \$2,500-\$5,000 direct refundable tax credit to offset the cost of insurance.		Sign legislation by end of his first term to ensure all Americans have affordable, quality, and portable health care coverage.		“Provide affordable and accessible health care to everyone, but most especially to children, elders, and persons with disabilities. Reform the nation’s health care system so that affordable care is available to all as a fundamental human right.”
<b>ENVIRONMENT</b> 	Establish a market based system to curb greenhouse gas emissions, mobilize innovative technologies, and strengthen the economy. Sixty percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.		Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and minimize the effects of climate change on the planet. Supports the most aggressive cap-and-trade approach to achieve an 80 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.		“Promote energy conservation and the development of alternative, renewable, and clean energy sources. Clean the land, air and water, so that born and unborn children, who are most vulnerable to environmental toxins, can lead healthy lives.”
<b>EDUCATION</b> 	Advocate of school choice. Will place parents and children at center of the education process. Believes all federal financial support must be predicated on providing parents the ability to move their children and the dollars associated with them from failing schools.		Reform and fund No Child Left Behind. Hold schools accountable for teaching English-language learners. Increase and reform college financial aid.		“Support adequate funding for education, especially for economically or socially disadvantaged children. Support school choice for all, but especially for low-income families. Allow religious and independent schools to participate equitably in all government efforts to improve education.”

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