

for people of faith The 2004 Voter Guide

Catholic Action Network
for Social Justice

&

Call To Action

Dear Faithful Citizen,

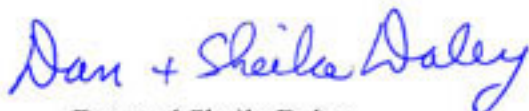
A national election calls us to make informed choices. In many ways, the United States is at a watershed moment, and millions of lives will be influenced by who wins the Presidential elections in November. The United States Catholic Bishops have reminded us in *The Challenge of Faithful Citizenship* (2004) that "Believers are called to become informed, active, and responsible participants in the political process." And later in that document, "We hope that voters will examine candidates on the full range of issues and on their personal integrity, philosophy, and performance."

The members of Catholic Action Network (CAN) and Call To Action (CTA) believe that citizens should make political decisions based on their informed consciences, considering issues that affect both born and unborn alike. Therefore, this voting guide covers a diverse range of political issues, from immigration to foreign policy, from the death penalty to health care. In this guide, we use the frame of Catholic Social Teachings to examine voting issues and candidates.

CAN is a St Louis-based group that uses education, prayer and action to work for social justice. CTA is a national organization advocating justice in the Church and society. Both are non-partisan organizations, and this document does not reflect endorsement of any candidate or party. Both groups are dependent upon donations from people like YOU. To make projects like this Voter's Guide a reality, please consider making a tax-deductible contribution.



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Resources: We are indebted to four primary sources in bringing you this guide: Network, the Catholic Social Justice Lobby; Leadership Conference of Women Religious (Reg. VII); "On The Issues" candidate comparison; and the Social Justice Office of the Archdiocese of St Paul and Minneapolis for their thorough catalog on Catholic Social Teaching. Websites for all the above plus other resources are available online at www.catholicactionnetwork.org or www.cta-usa.org.

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING PRINCIPLE:

WORK AND THE RIGHTS OF WORKERS

The economy exists to serve people, not the other way around. People have a right to productive work and fair wages. Workers have the right to safe working conditions, the right to participate in decisions that affect them in the workplace, and the right to security in case of sickness, disability, unemployment or old age. All workers have the right to form unions. In fact, unions are referred to in the teaching as an "indispensable" element in the search for social justice.

CURRENT APPLICATION AND COMMENT

The current minimum wage of \$5.15/hour increasingly forces working families to hold multiple jobs to make ends meet. The minimum wage has not increased since 1997 and its real value today is 30% below its peak in 1968. Since 2001, approximately 2.4 million jobs have been lost in the United States, and millions more workers are concerned about their deteriorating pensions, health benefits, and ability to make ends meet.

Their Words...

GEORGE W. BUSH

"This Nation is building on economic recovery... with policies that further promote growth and job creation. In addition, we will continue to strengthen good schools, quality and affordable health care, and programs that promote hope and compassion in our communities. Government must exercise fiscal responsibility by limiting spending growth, focusing on the results of Government programs, and cutting wasteful spending."

JOHN KERRY

"I think it's time we had a President who will... provide middle class payroll tax relief, not more tax giveaways for those at the top... and raise [minimum wage] from a 30 year low, not increase the tax burden on the middle class and those struggling to join it."

Their Actions...

Supports "state flexibility," which would allow states with minimum wage rates of \$5.15/hour (the current federal level) to opt out of any future federal minimum wage increases.

Current proposal to change the Fair Labor Standards Act would change overtime regulations to deny overtime pay and the protection of the 40-hour workweek to over 8 million workers.

29% of the recent Bush Administration tax cuts benefit Americans in the top 1% income bracket, (whose average 2000 income was \$174 million,) while less than 2% of the tax cut goes to the bottom 40% of earners.

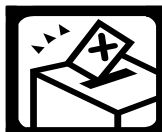
Since 2000, newly created loopholes have decreased corporate tax payments by \$100 billion or more annually.

Original cosponsor of Senator Edward Kennedy's legislation to increase the minimum wage to \$6.65 an hour by 2003.

Compiled a 91% lifetime AFL-CIO voting record in the Senate.

Current co-sponsor of The Employee Free Choice Act which would allow employees freer choice on whether to form unions, provide mediation and arbitration, and establish stronger penalties for violation of employee rights.

Voted against the final version of the Medicare Prescription Drug Act which threatened employer-provided drug coverage for millions of retirees.



CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING PRINCIPLE:

DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

All people are sacred, made in the image and likeness of God. People do not lose dignity because of disability, poverty, age, lack of success, or race. This emphasizes people over things, being over having. This principle promotes respect for all human life.

CURRENT APPLICATION AND COMMENT

Dignity issues include both the headline-making beginning and end-of-life issues, and also quality-of-life issues. Women are still paid 75% as much as their male counterparts in the workplace. Many seniors cannot afford the medications they need. We must ask questions related to these vulnerable members of society: Are our communities accessible to disabled people? Do poor children have access to Head Start programs? Are civil rights protected for all people? As debate ensues over communion-withholding from pro-choice political candidates, many quieter issues relating to the dignity of the human person remain unaddressed.

Their Words...

GEORGE W. BUSH

"I believe our society has a responsibility to defend the vulnerable and the weak. And I believe our nation should set a goal: that unborn children should be welcomed in life and protected in law. This is the ideal: a generous society that values every life."

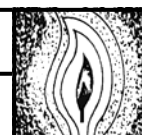
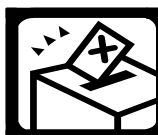
JOHN KERRY

"I'm running for president because I believe it is time for this country to ask again, why not? Why not in the richest country on the face of the planet, health care for all of our citizens accessible and affordable? Why not early childhood education so that all of our children get the best start in life?"

Their Actions...

- As Governor of Texas, executed more prisoners (152) than any governor in modern US history.
- Called for Constitutional Amendment to ban same-sex marriage; opposes same-sex domestic benefits.
- Signed into law Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act of 2003, is against abortion except in cases of rape, incest, or threatened health of mother. Opposes doctor-assisted suicide.
- Opposed mandatory child-safety locks on guns and as Governor supported the right of Texans to carry concealed weapons.
- Proposed "School Readiness Act" threatened the Head Start program with funding cuts and the elimination of federal standards.
- Defunded and closed several women's initiative programs and offices soon after taking office, reversed earlier support for the "Convention on the Elimination of... Discrimination Against Women," ratified by every country in the world except the U.S. & Somalia.

- Sponsored the Innocence Protection Act to require DNA testing for all federal executions; supports a moratorium on federal executions (except in cases of terrorism.)
- Supports equal rights for civil unions rather than same-sex marriage, has voted to include sexual orientation in non-discrimination laws.
- Has consistently voted for women's right to choose abortion, says doctor-assisted suicide is matter for states to decide.
- Consistently voted to enforce background checks, safety regulations on guns.
- Opposes current proposed cuts to Medicaid program (affecting millions with disabilities).
- Co-sponsored the 1993 Women's Health Equity Act and the Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Act of 2003, both promoting health initiatives for women.



CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING PRINCIPLE:

PROMOTION OF PEACE AND DISARMAMENT

Catholic teaching understands peace as a positive, action-oriented concept. Peace is not just the absence of war. It involves mutual respect and collaboration between peoples and nations. There is a close relationship between peace and justice. Peace is the fruit of justice and is dependent upon right order among human beings and human institutions.

CURRENT APPLICATION AND COMMENT

Global peace requires international cooperation, the elimination of weapons proliferation, the promotion of human rights and the addressing of root causes of terrorism. The Israel/Palestine conflict remains one of the greatest threats to world peace while strong U.S. economic, military and diplomatic support for Israel casts doubt on the ability of the U.S. to serve as an objective broker in this situation. Having engaged in two wars in as many years, the U.S. needs a new vision for peace and security based on preventing deadly conflict and seeking alternatives to war.

Their Words...

GEORGE W. BUSH

"We will defend the peace by opposing and preventing violence by terrorists and outlaw regimes; we will preserve the peace by fostering an era of good relations among the world's great powers; and we will extend the peace by seeking to extend the benefits of freedom and prosperity across the globe."

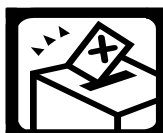
JOHN KERRY

"As President, I will not cede our security to any nation or institution – and adversaries will have no doubt of my resolve to use force if necessary - but I will always understand that even the only super-power on earth cannot succeed without cooperation and compromise with our friends and allies."

Their Actions...

- ✓ The Bush administration's global war on terror includes a new national security strategy based on preemptive strikes; transforming the U.S. military; and raising defense spending by \$100 billion (a 30% increase).
- ✓ The war in Afghanistan was endorsed by the United Nations, while the U.S. invasion of Iraq received little international support.
- ✓ The Bush Administration has either withdrawn from or not signed: the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Ottawa Landmine Treaty, and International Criminal Court.
- ✓ Continued unconditional support for Israel includes over \$3 billion in direct annual assistance, and multiple unilateral vetoes in the UN Security Council of resolutions condemning actions of the Israeli occupation. (Israel is in violation of 69 UN Security Council resolutions.)

- ✓ Voted to support U.S. military operations launched in Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo. Voted against use of U.S. military forces in 1991 after Saddam Hussein's army invaded Kuwait, and for the resolution authorizing use of military force in Iraq in 2002, with "misgivings."
- ✓ In 2003, voted against the \$87 billion for continued funding of the Iraq operation that President Bush requested, one of only 12 senators to vote "no."
- ✓ Supports current U.S. policy in the Israel-Palestine conflict, including construction of the "security" wall, describing the Palestinians as "an uncommitted partner" in the peace process.
- ✓ Opposes development and funding for new, more "usable" nuclear weapons, supports Star Wars Missile Defense.



CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING PRINCIPLE:

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

People have a fundamental right to life, food, shelter, health care, education and employment. All people have a right to participate in decisions that affect their lives. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities. For example, all persons have a duty to respect the rights of others in society. All persons have a responsibility to participate in social and political activities and institutions that promote the common good.

CURRENT APPLICATION AND COMMENT

Although it spends more on health care than any other industrialized nation, the U.S. stands alone in this group as the only country failing to provide full access for all citizens- 44 million are currently uninsured. In housing, one quarter of the U.S. population -- 65 million people -- experience housing problems that include high-cost burdens, substandard conditions, overcrowding and homelessness. The USA Patriot Act, passed by Congress 45 days after the September 11th attacks, represents another challenge to the basic rights of people by weakening protections levied by the Bill of Rights and Constitution.

Their Words...

GEORGE W. BUSH

"We must reform health care in America. We must build a modern, innovative health care system that gives patients more options and fewer orders, and strengthens the doctor-patient relationship."

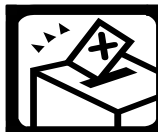
JOHN KERRY

"I believe, as a matter of fundamental fairness, that health care should be a right, not a privilege in America. Our health care system has the world's best doctors and nurses...But far too many Americans can't afford or access the system."

Their Actions...

- Current request for funding for the 2005 Housing Voucher Program is \$1.6 billion less than what is needed to fund the vouchers currently in use, resulting in the loss of 250,000 vouchers.
- Signed the controversial \$400 billion Medicare Prescription Drug Modernization Act to help senior citizens buy medications through a prescription drug benefit; critics say it is a giveaway to drug makers and insurance companies and a prelude to the dismantling of the program.
- Signed No Child Left Behind Act, which makes federal funding contingent on states' giving standardized tests in math and reading and publishing results for third- through eighth-graders.
- Signed and supports renewal of USA Patriot Act, which erodes both civil rights and the American system of checks and balances. Under the Patriot Act, the FBI can access citizens' medical records, library records, and student records without notification or a warrant.

- Supports the creation of a nationalized government-based health care system funded by reversing tax cuts.
- Has voted for every major Civil Rights bill to come before Congress since 1985 including the Civil Rights Act of 1991, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Equal Rights Amendment. Voted for Patriot Act, now opposes.
- Has consistently voted against school vouchers, saying that parents "should have more choices... But public schools need resources and support, and vouchers drain them of both."
- Sponsored a 2003 bill to establish a National Housing Trust Fund to spur the construction of new, affordable rental units for low-income, working families.



CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING PRINCIPLE:

GLOBAL SOLIDARITY AND DEVELOPMENT

We are one human family. Our responsibilities to each other cross national, racial, economic and ideological differences. We are called to work globally for justice. Authentic development must avoid the extremism of underdevelopment on the one hand, and "superdevelopment" on the other. Accumulating material goods, and technical resources will be unsatisfactory and debasing if there is no respect for the moral, cultural, and spiritual dimensions of the human person.

CURRENT APPLICATION AND COMMENT

Since the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was implemented, we've learned that NAFTA and similar free trade agreements, like the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) and the Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), lead to job movement overseas. Companies, in order to cut costs, have increasingly moved to countries where wages are lowest and environmental protections are weakest. Millions of people lack basics such as clean water while their governments are forced to pay more in debt repayments to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or World Bank than in health care and education combined.

GEORGE W. BUSH

"We support free trade in America because it is vital to the creation of jobs. It's vital to the success of our economy. As free trade expands across the earth, the realm of human freedom expands with it."

- Signed into law "Fast Track" legislation in 2003, which transferred constitutionally-mandated Congressional oversight of trade agreements to the Executive Branch.
- Currently negotiating a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) agreement that will expand NAFTA to 34 Central and South American countries as soon as 2005. The proposed agreement does not contain strong worker, environmental or human rights protections.
- Bush's 2004 federal budget included changes in tax incentives that encourage corporations to export U.S. jobs overseas.

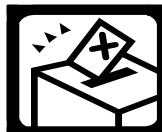
Their Words...

JOHN KERRY

"You can't have trade be a rush to the bottom, and you can't leave other nations with a one-way street, and you can't abuse people the way it has been. It would be disastrous to just cancel NAFTA and withdraw from the WTO. You have to fix it."

Their Actions...

- Voted to support the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) Implementation Act in 1993.
- Supported the Africa Trade bill in 1999, and the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) in 2000. Both bills disproportionately benefited corporations over the people of Africa and did not provide the necessary protections for workers and the environment.
- Supported the Global Debt Relief bill, which approved \$225 million for third world debt relief in 2000.



CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING PRINCIPLE:

PREFERENTIAL OPTION FOR THE POOR

The moral test of a society is how it treats its most vulnerable members. The poor have the most urgent moral claim on the conscience of the nation. We are called to look at public policy decisions in terms of how they affect the poor. The "option for the poor" is not an adversarial slogan that pits one group or class against another, rather it states that the deprivation and powerlessness of the poor is a wound to the whole community.

CURRENT APPLICATION AND COMMENT

The federal budget is a moral statement that demonstrates our nation's priorities. Those with the greatest need- the poor, the immigrant, women, and those in need- require the greatest consideration. The need is increasing with over 35 million Americans living in poverty. A decline in federal funding, along with skyrocketing spending on the military budget, threatens the safety net of services that Americans depend on, including welfare, food stamps, Medicaid and Social Security.

Their Words...

GEORGE W. BUSH

"It is compassionate to actively help our fellow citizens in need. It is conservative to insist on responsibility and results. And with this hopeful approach, we will make a real difference in people's lives."

JOHN KERRY

"We cannot afford to lose a single child to ill-health, under-education, abuse, addiction, jail, or gun violence. America's highest goal should be for every child to grow up to be a successful young adult."

Their Actions...

- Proposed Temporary Worker Program would match foreign workers with employers, but does not provide eventual amnesty, nor a provision for family reunification.
- Established the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives in 2001, advocating that "armies of compassion" - churches and charity groups, rather than Government- should assist the poor.
- Proposed 2005 budget allocates \$421 billion to the Pentagon (an increase of 7.9%), \$60 billion for education, and \$51 billion for health care. Programs in affordable housing, child care, environmental protection and veterans' health receive less than a .01% increase in this budget (less than the amount needed to keep up with inflation.) The Pentagon budget does not include the ongoing conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan (already at \$166 billion,) and the Administration will not send another request for money until 2005, after the election.

- Co-sponsored the Agricultural Job Opportunity, Benefits, and Security Act of 2003. This bill, still under consideration, would create a guest worker program that leads to amnesty for certain agricultural workers.
- Voted for Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1995 ("welfare overhaul") which has had mixed results: a decrease in welfare caseloads, an increase of former welfare recipients in the workforce, but no real decrease in actual poverty as many former recipients now access private agencies for food, rent, and utility assistance.
- No plans for reducing military spending; national security plan includes building alliances, freeing America from dependence on Mideast oil, utilizing diplomacy, and modernizing the military's technology.



CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING PRINCIPLE:

STEWARDSHIP OF GOD'S CREATION

The goods of the earth are gifts from God, and they are intended by God for the benefit of everyone. There is a "social mortgage" that guides our use of the world's goods, and we have a responsibility to care for these goods as stewards and trustees, not as mere consumers and users. How we treat the environment is a measure of our stewardship, a sign of our respect for the Creator.

CURRENT APPLICATION AND COMMENT

The mainstream scientific community agrees that greenhouse gases (GHG) like carbon dioxide are changing our climate- the mean global temperature has increased significantly in the past century. Immediate threats to humankind relate to an increase in storms, floods and droughts, heat waves in urban areas, and an increase in the spread of disease. The U.S. is the biggest single contributor to global climate change, producing 25% of all greenhouse gases. When we pollute our environment, we place the greatest burden on children. The negative impact of air pollutants on children is well documented, and it is our children who will inherit the legacy of our footprints on the planet.

GEORGE W. BUSH

"In this century, the greatest environmental progress will come about not through endless lawsuits or command-and-control regulations, but through technology and innovation."

Their Words...

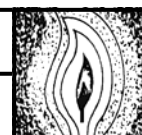
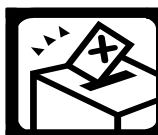
JOHN KERRY

"Nowhere is there a greater need for a new vision - a better vision - than in the decisions we make that affect the health of the environment. We know intuitively that America is only as healthy as the water our children drink, the air they breathe, the yards and parks in which they play and laugh, and the communities in which they live."

Their Actions...

- Reduced environment and natural resources spending by \$1 billion in 2003 budget while granting billions of dollars worth of subsidies and incentives to timber, oil and mining companies.
- Opposes the Kyoto climate treaty of 1997, which calls for 38 industrialized countries to make cuts in green house gas emissions.
- Revised Army Corps regulations to allow industrial mining waste to be dumped in streams, in 2002.
- Current "Healthy Forests" initiative and "Clear Skies" proposal would allow logging companies and electric utilities to increase their profits at the expense of environmental protection and the public's health.
- In 2001, suspended Forest Service regulations that gave higher priority to watershed health, wildlife, and recreation than to timber sales.

- Voted against permitting oil drilling and exploration in part of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska.
- Authored the Marine Mammal Protection Act Amendments of 1994, which banned the use of drift nets threatening dolphins and other marine life.
- Supported the National Acid Rain Control Act to improve standards and create a fund for clean air.
- Current co-sponsor of the Clean Power Act, designed to require utilities to control multiple pollutants - carbon dioxide, mercury, sulfur dioxide, and nitrogen oxides.



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