



POLITICAL ACTIVITY POLICY

Diocese of Great Falls-Billings

The political campaign season is upon us once again. Supporting or not supporting a particular candidate as a representative of the Diocese is not permitted. This is the case, not only because it affects our tax-exempt status, but also because it entangles us in partisan political positions. Candidate endorsements (either for or against) are prohibited, including such statements in a sermon, parish bulletin or newsletter, or editorial position in a diocesan newspaper. Catholic organizations (any which are part of the diocesan corporation) may not provide financial support or other forms of campaign support to any candidate, political action committee, or political party. Parish or other church-related facilities are not to be used for any kind of political activity. Personal support for a candidate or a position is allowed, but if done so, must be clearly done as a private citizen. Presence at any partisan political event should never be in clerical attire.

A second caution has to do with distributing materials (including such things as voter guides, candidate questionnaires, and various forms of voter education materials) prepared by other organizations, even if such organizations present a “legal opinion” that meets IRS standards (there are different types of standards. Materials used by entities of the diocese must meet the standards which apply to the diocese).

If there is a particular question about distributing materials, please provide a copy to the Chancellor who will have it reviewed by diocesan attorneys.

Promulgated January 1995
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By Bishop Michael W. Warfel