

Voting: It's My Kuleana...

We are privileged to live in a democratic republic where we, the people, choose the men and women who will make the laws governing our society.

People of faith, of course, are no exception and it is up to each of us to know who the candidates are and what they stand for. Christians are called to be salt and light in our communities. Voting provides a marvelous opportunity to do just that.

Churches and other community groups play a key role in the education process by offering voters the opportunity to learn the candidates' positions on a variety of issues of interest to the community. We are pleased to be a resource to you in this regard.

Hawaii Family Forum and Hawaii Catholic Conference are again providing a non-partisan voter's guide to you during the 2008 election season. As always, we will never endorse political candidates or political parties. To learn more, log on to our website at www.hawaiifamilyforum.org or www.catholichawaii.org or call us at (808) 203-6704.

Contact HFF/HCC if you have questions about the propriety of a particular voter's guide.



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Guidelines for Churches and Pastors During an Election Year

Prohibited and Permissible Activities
for Church Groups

*A joint effort of the
Hawaii Family Forum /
Hawaii Catholic Conference*

JULY 2008

DOs and DON'Ts: Guidelines for Churches & Pastors

Below are the suggested guidelines for churches and pastors as recommended by Hawaii Family Forum/ Hawaii Catholic Conference.

Because churches are 501(C)(3) tax exempt organizations, their involvement in the electoral process is limited by the Internal Revenue Service. However, there are vitally important ways churches can legally be involved.

[This document has been approved by legal counsel and is approved for distribution in churches.](#)

PERMISSIBLE ACTIVITIES:

VOTER REGISTRATION CAMPAIGNS

A church may participate in non-partisan voter registration, voter identification and get out the vote activities. To be non-partisan, these activities may not be directed at the supporters of any particular candidate or political party.

Voter registration drives may be properly conducted in an unlimited fashion. Again, such drives must be non-partisan. We recommend they precede the voter education campaign.

VOTER EDUCATION CAMPAIGNS

Voter education may be done in an UNLIMITED fashion. A church may participate in non-partisan voter education. Such education involves providing information about the electoral process, how to register, or where to vote. All these activities are permissible as long as they are not directed at supporters of one particular candidate or political party.

CANDIDATE SURVEYS & VOTER GUIDES

A church may publish the results of candidate surveys on public issues. Voter guides must not include a direct or implied endorsement of a candidate or expressly advocate the election or defeat of any candidate. Candidate surveys must cover a variety of issues of interest to the general community, not be focused on a single issue.

"He has shown you, O man, what is good.

And what does the Lord require of you?

To act justly and to love mercy and to

walk humbly with your God."

Micah 6:8

PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES:

ENDORSEMENT OF POLITICAL CANDIDATES OR POLITICAL PARTIES

- ⇒ **NEVER endorse a political candidate or political party**
- ⇒ **NEVER contribute to a political candidate or party including "in-kind" contributions**
- ⇒ **NEVER authorize candidate promotional material to be distributed anywhere on church property**
- ⇒ **NEVER distribute voting information of incumbents unless it is done on a regular basis and not just at election time. Voting records must cover a variety of issues.**
- ⇒ **NEVER distribute any voter information that has not been approved by the HFF/HCC. If you have any questions as to the legitimacy of any voters guide, please contact us at (808) 203-6704.**

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