



## FLORIDA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS 2020 Candidate Questionnaire Project

### 2020 FLORIDA LEGISLATIVE QUESTIONS BACKGROUND

#### *Do you support or oppose...*

1. **ABORTION LIMITS:** Prohibiting abortion when a fetus has reached 20 weeks gestation and has the capacity to feel pain?

*Two sections of Florida statutes currently prohibit abortions in the third trimester and when a fetus is viable. Significant scientific research has observed that babies can feel pain at 20 weeks gestation or even earlier.*

2. **ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE:** Increasing health coverage options for uninsured Floridians, especially the unemployed and the working poor?

*Many Floridians do not have affordable health insurance available to them, often because they are unemployed, or because of low wages. Workers who lose their jobs must make expensive COBRA payments to keep their insurance in place, or lose coverage. According to a recent [report](#), 1 in 4 working-age adults in Florida is without insurance in the midst of the current pandemic.*

3. **AFFORDABLE HOUSING:** Using all state housing trust funds as intended to address affordable housing needs in Florida?

*The Sadowski Act of 1992 created a dedicated revenue source for the state and local housing trust funds from a 10 cent increase in doc stamps on real estate transactions. Beginning with the 2008-09 state budget, over \$2 billion has been diverted into general revenue rather than appropriated to affordable housing.*

4. **CRIMINAL JUSTICE:** Authorizing courts to impose a sentence less than the mandatory minimum term of imprisonment for nonviolent crimes?

*Judges are required to abide by mandatory minimum sentences, even if circumstances specific to an individual or the crime warrant a less stringent penalty. Providing judges a safety valve for low level, non-violent offenses would allow them to use discretion to downward depart from mandatory minimums prison sentences under certain circumstances.*

5. **DEATH PENALTY REPEAL:** Ending Florida's use of the death penalty while preserving the alternative of a life sentence without parole?

*There are two possible sentences for those found guilty of first-degree murder: death and a life sentence without parole. If executions are prohibited, the alternative of life without parole will remain.*

6. **END-OF-LIFE PROTECTION:** Preserving Florida law that bans doctor-prescribed suicide?

*Assisting in one's suicide ("self-murder") is considered manslaughter in Florida Law (Ch. 782.08), a second-degree felony.*

7. **FREEDOM TO SERVE:** Allowing health care providers and workers the freedom to serve in accord with their conscience?

*Florida has historically provided conscience protections for healthcare workers within a variety of circumstances (abortion, executions, family planning, end-of-life). They are not afforded the same protections in responding to gender dysphoria and ensuring that talk-based therapies are available for those seeking to address unwanted same-sex attraction or support for chaste living.*

8. **PARENTAL EMPOWERMENT:** Eliminating the requirement to attend public school the year prior to receiving a state scholarship for K-12 non-public schools?

*Florida law is inconsistent when it comes to whether or not students must attend public school the year prior to receiving a state scholarship to attend a K-12 nonpublic school.*

*The Family Empowerment Scholarship (FES) for children from low-income families and the McKay Scholarship for students with special needs both require a year of public school attendance prior to entry; the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship for children from low-income families and the Gardiner Scholarship for students with special needs have no such requirement.*

9. **PROTECTING WORKERS:** Requiring drinking water, shade, and annual heat illness training be provided for farmworkers and other outdoor workers?

*Agricultural workers are at higher risk than other workers of dying of heat related illness. In 2020, legislation was passed to protect student athletes from heat-related injury and death.*

10. **RELIGIOUS FREEDOM:** Respecting the autonomy of non-public schools to maintain policies that distinguish dress codes and other aspects of student life on the biological basis of sex?

*Non-public schools maintain dress codes and other student life/behavior policies based on the biological basis of sex. Constitutional protections regarding the free exercise of religion allow religious-based schools to maintain their autonomy in regards to certain policies.*