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April 4, 2007

RE: CCK Policies on Political Activity

Dear Pastor/Pastoral Director, School Superintendent, Catholic Charities Director,

We wrote to you in August 2006 encouraging civic involvement by Catholics in our democracy and restating our policy on the prohibition of partisan political activity by churches and individuals representing our church in their official capacities. We also reiterated “our long-standing Catholic Conference of Kentucky policy that only voting guide materials published directly by United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (*e.g.*, Faithful Citizenship) or by the Catholic Conference of Kentucky may be distributed in parishes. Other materials, even if they are published by a Catholic organization and seem non-partisan, shall not be distributed.” Attached is a copy of our 2006 letter that includes an explanation of our theological and legal reasons for this important policy.

We appreciate your faithful implementation of this policy across the Commonwealth.

We write again to remind you of its importance and to emphasize the policy because Kentucky’s 2007 gubernatorial race, which will have a contested primary in May, and a contested general election in November, is under way; the November 2008 Presidential race has already begun; and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is actively pursuing those who violate the law.

In 2006, the IRS began a Political Activities Compliance Initiative (PACI), offering educational assistance and aggressively pursuing credible referrals. That initiative continues.

One current area of IRS focus involves charities that have made contributions directly to political organizations. IRS is combing the mandatory contributor reports filed by political organizations in order to identify potential violators. IRS has sent examination letters to 179 non-churches and 79 churches that the IRS has reason to believe made contributions to political organizations during the 2006 election season.

The IRS is also looking at links from charity websites to political websites, *e.g.*, links that lead to information about candidates for public office that would be prohibited if the material was provided directly on the charity’s web site.

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**Most Reverend  
Thomas C. Kelly, O.P.**  
Archbishop of Louisville

**Most Reverend  
John J. McRaith**  
Bishop of Owensboro

**Most Reverend  
Roger J. Foys**  
Bishop of Covington

**Most Reverend  
Ronald W. Gainer**  
Bishop of Lexington

**Edward C. Monahan**  
Executive Director

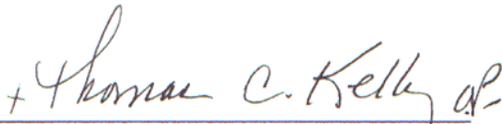
Another potential area for mischief is the use of computers by employees of charitable organizations who post or send e-mail or other messages containing material that constitutes political campaign intervention and that is clearly identified as having originated from the charitable organization.

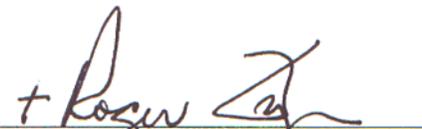
Our CCK policy prohibits contributions by churches or Catholic organizations directly to political organizations, links from church websites to political websites, and the use of computers by employees of church organizations who post or send e-mail or other messages containing material that constitutes political campaign intervention and that is clearly identified as having originated from the church organization.

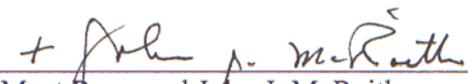
The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Office of General Counsel has produced Political Activity Guidelines for Catholic Organizations (2007). This document sets out practical explanations and illustrations for various situations that Churches encounter. Please read it, educate the leaders in your parish or Catholic organization on it, and follow its advice. It is found in the right hand column of the home page of the Catholic Conference of Kentucky website: [www.ccky.org](http://www.ccky.org).

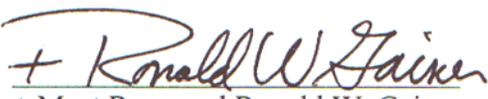
Dioceses, parishes, and other Catholic organizations must be extra mindful of the prohibition against intervention in political campaigns that applies to all section 501©(3) organizations. We appreciate your continued faithful adherence to this policy.

Sincerely,

  
+ Most Reverend Thomas C. Kelly, O.P.  
Archbishop of Louisville

  
+ Most Reverend Roger J. Foys  
Bishop of Covington

  
+ Most Reverend John J. McRaith  
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