

Kentucky voters encouraged to meet with candidates, can have significant influence on legislation

Laura Keener
Editor


On Election Day, Nov. 6, Kentuckians will cast votes for every seat in the state House of Representatives and several seats in the Senate. The candidates that prevail will begin their work as legislators in January for the 2019 term of the Kentucky General Assembly.

Jason Hall, executive director, and Andrew Vandiver, associate

director, Catholic Conference of Kentucky, remind voters that they have an important role to play — not only on election day but also after the election — as legislators will soon grapple with significant issues related to health care, education, tax policy and the criminal justice system. (See box below)

“Candidates for office need to hear from you now in order to

(Continued on page 7)



Election 2018

Important issues and potential questions for Kentucky candidates:

Educational Choice: CCK supports policies that would enable more families to choose the school that best fits their children’s needs, including non-public schools and faith-based options.

- Do you support Scholarship Tax Credit legislation that encourages private charitable donations to programs that provide need based tuition assistance to Kentucky families for K-12 non-public schools?

Respect for Life: CCK supports legislation that supports mothers and protects their unborn children.

- Do you support legislation that protects women from facing discrimination due to pregnancy by requiring that reasonable accommodations be made in the workplace during the pregnancy and while nursing?
- Would you support legislative efforts to eliminate or limit abortion in Kentucky?

Death Penalty: CCK supports ending the use of capital punishment in Kentucky.

- Would you support legislation that would abolish the death penalty in favor of life without parole?
- Do you support legislation that would eliminate the death penalty for defendants with a diagnosed severe mental illness at the time of their crime?

Criminal Justice Reform: CCK supports efforts to limit incarceration and to create a pathway for former inmates to rejoin their communities as productive members of society.

- Do you support legislation that reduces incarceration rates for non-violent offenses and provides a pathway for inmates to return to the workforce as productive members of society?

From the Catholic Conference of Kentucky online at cck.org.

Kentucky voters encouraged to meet candidates

(Continued from page 1)

start the conversation on issues that they will consider during the next legislative session and beyond," said Mr. Vandiver. "No matter who wins on Election Day, a large number of seats will be held by first-time candidates who may be new to the work of the Catholic Conference of Kentucky ("CCK")."

The CCK represents the Church and Kentucky's four Roman Catholic dioceses in public policy matters on both the state and federal level. The conference seeks to promote the common good for all Kentuckians. In Kentucky, the staff works with the General Assembly, the governor and state agencies, advocating for laws and policies that reflect Gospel values and the social teachings of the Church.

For the upcoming election the CCK has created an information sheet detailing issues that they believe have the possibility of coming up during the next legislative session and that are of interest to the Church. The CCK encourages voters to begin the conversation with candidates now — asking candidates where they stand on issues and sharing what is important to them — so that they can affect the legislative process.

"A lot of people I talk to think that since a candidate is a Republican or Democrat they must have 'such and such' a position," said Mr. Vandiver. "The reality is that each legislator is an individual person who has their own opinion about things and that opinion may not line up with the national party platform or even the local party platform. You really need to meet that person as an individual and talk to them and engage them."

Not knowing where a legislator stands on important issues can have significant, long-term consequences when it comes to the health, economic and moral fabric of the State of Kentucky.

"I know people who think their legislator favors an

issue and they don't or they think they are against something when they are not," said Mr. Vandiver.

But even when a candidate, who does not share a voter's political view, is elected the voter can still have significant



influence.

"Legislators are persuadable and it's important to take the time to talk to them because they could go either way," said Mr. Vandiver. "And that voter in their district will have a lot of power to persuade."

The CCK encourages all Catholics to be informed voters by being aware of the issues. Ways to do that are by

reading the diocesan newspaper and getting connected with CCK by signing up for its newsletter and following them on social media — Facebook and Twitter. Secondly, take that information and don't be afraid to talk to legislators. A voter should know how important his or her voice is.

"I can't tell you how disappointed I am when people assume something is decided one way or another, or that their legislature has decided on an issue, and they feel powerless, when they really are not," Mr. Vandiver said. "They have a lot of influence on legislators, even more so than we do at the conference. While legislators like us at the conference, and they feel we provide them with good information and we are credible, at the end of the day, we are just two people who are not in their district. It's more powerful to hear from the people in their community."

For information about or to connected with the Catholic Conference of Kentucky visit www.cck.org.

Notre Dame Academy is hosting "Meet the Candidates Night for the City of Park Hills,"

Tuesday, Oct. 23, 7-9 p.m.

Voters can hear firsthand the candidates positions on issues of importance to the city, and pose questions directly to them.

NDA's Rho Kappa Society, the National Social Studies Honor Society, in conjunction with Notre Dame Academy, sponsors this event. In sponsoring Meet the Candidates Night, NDA adheres to strict guidelines to assure a fair and impartial opportunity for all candidates to present their views.

The event is free and open to the public.