

# Political Action

## Priority Issue Voting and Other Myths

Our forefathers drafted a constitution and set in motion a system of government that allows each citizen to register to vote and choose representation at the national and state levels of government freely and privately. Each of us decides which candidate deserves our vote. In making that decision, we are subjected to enormous amounts of advertising, polling information and media analysis.

We often have a built-in cultural mechanism for making our choice. In that mechanism there are issues that we personally care about when casting our votes. However, a single issue often becomes the deciding factor for many of us.

Since the country began, the issues that move us have been different and varied. The issue of discrimination is a case in point. The "Dred Scott" Supreme Court decision in 1857, denying personhood to Black Americans, perpetuated slavery and set in motion years of struggle. This single issue influenced election after election, until slavery was finally abolished. Slowly, through the democratic process and ongoing work, it has improved the way we relate to one another and defined our civil rights.

Other issues that influence elections include economics, the environment and foreign policy. These issues have continually had a strong influence on the way we vote. Throughout history the electorate has made the greatest impact when a single issue captures the hearts and minds of a majority of those voting.

Are we surprised? Our forefathers knew that when people become roused enough to answer a need or right a wrong, they must have recourse to those who govern them through laws and policies.

There are nearly one million abortions a year in our country, and each time an abortion occurs, a woman is victimized, her baby destroyed and the abortionist made richer. This violent solution to an untimely pregnancy is

not just a "termination of pregnancy" but the killing of an innocent child.

Abortion is the most important issue facing America today. The right to life for all members of our human family is inextricably interwoven into the rights guaranteed by our Founding Fathers. The right to life must be our top priority at the ballot box.

As concerned citizens elect candidates on their willingness to protect human life, presidents, legislators and judges will begin to restore protection to the unborn, and the end to abortion on demand becomes a reality.

A candidate's pro-abortion stand becomes a disqualifying issue as voters awaken to the terrible injustice perpetrated by abortionists.

If the civil rights of the unborn throughout the nine months of pregnancy are to be restored, then our obligation to vote for candidates who hold the right to life inviolate becomes as important as democracy itself. Without life, all other rights have no meaning.

As Judge John Noonan said, "Once or twice in a century an issue arises . . . so far-reaching in its consequences and so deep in its foundations that it calls every person to take a stand."

Abortion is one of those issues.

The democratic process is enhanced each time you and I vote pro-life. Our vote is void of self interest or economic gain. As pro-life voters we are called to an issue of such magnitude that we cannot stand idle. We must speak with one voice for the unborn child. We must vote pro-life.

position. This could include polls, growth in membership of the local prolife affiliate, etc.

- Give printed materials to support the prolife position, but don't overdo it—the more material you leave, the less likely it is that any of it will be read by the legislator or staff.
- If you are asked a question that you don't know the answer to, don't guess. Say you'll provide that information later—and do so. If you give misinformation, it can erode your credibility and that of other prolife lobbyists.
- Many legislators like to keep their options open. Don't mistake vague expressions of sympathy for real commitments. Politely press for specific commitments, with questions such as, "Will you vote for this measure?" You will not always obtain a firm answer, but you should try.
- Don't ignore staff. Legislators are busy people, and they necessarily depend heavily on their staff. In many cases, aides strongly influence a legislator's vote on specific prolife issues through "filtering" the information he/she receives and through direct advice. Record the names of staff persons who sit in on your meeting, and chat with them before or afterwards if possible.
- As soon as possible after the meeting, write up a summary of what was said. Keep one copy in your confidential local files and forward one copy to the RLM Legislative Office, 233 N. Walnut Street, Lansing, MI 48933.

### **Finding Your Legislator**

You can use the RLM website at [rtl.org](http://rtl.org) to find out who your legislators are and how to contact them, or the websites provided by the House and Senate.

**Senate:** [senate.michigan.gov](http://senate.michigan.gov)

**House:** [house.mi.gov](http://house.mi.gov)