

WHAT IS LEGAL AND ILLEGAL, GIVEN THE IRS RESTRICTIONS ON 501(C)(3) ORGANIZATIONS

Parishes, Churches, and Clergy do not lose their First Amendment rights when speaking from the pulpit, and CAN discuss cultural and political issues without fear of legal repercussion and/or losing 501(c)(3) status.

Clergy may, without threat of repercussion:

- Preach on moral and social issues
- Encourage civic involvement
- Register parishioners to vote
- Provide ideological and Party platform comparisons
- Invite and conduct candidate issue forums, including but not limited to, informational forums regarding school curriculum and parents' rights
- On behalf of the Church, state the position of a candidate on moral and social issues, and may comment on that position from a Biblical perspective

Clergy, religious leaders and lay ministers may:

- State the impact of a law or proposition and comment on its consistency, or lack thereof, with Biblical teachings
- Invite candidates or elected officials to speak at church services
- Individually and personally endorse candidates for political office
- Provide a list of parishioners to candidates for use in seeking support or raising funds only if rented at fair market value.
- Establish a political action committee separate from the church, without using the assets of the church.
- Separate from the church or parish, allow their individual name and title (bishop, priest, etc.) to be used as a supporter of a candidate, for identification purposes only, in that candidate's own advertisements.

- Allow political candidates to use church facilities, on the same basis that civic groups are allowed (i.e. if civic group is required to pay a rent, then the political candidate should be charged the same)

Clergy/Religious/Parish/Church Cannot:

- Endorse candidates on behalf of the church
- Use church funds or services to contribute directly to candidates or political committees (e.g. mailing lists or office equipment)
- Permit distribution of materials that favor any candidate or political party on church premises (ideological and party platform comparisons are allowed)
- Use church funds to pay fees for political events
- Set-up a political committees on behalf of the church that contribute funds directly to political candidates
- Allow candidates to solicit funds while speaking in a church
- Engage in significant lobbying efforts on behalf of the church for the passage of any law or proposition