



California Catholic Conference

CCC Policy on California and National Ballot Propositions

Approved by the Catholic Bishops of California

The California Catholic Conference staff reviews all statewide ballot initiatives and referenda. The bishops, after appropriate consultation, may choose—either individually or as a conference—to support, oppose, or take no position on each measure. Signature gathering, through parishes, schools and ministries, to place an initiative on the California ballot is very rarely permitted. In the past, this has only been allowed for measures which directly protect the sanctity of human life. These policies, as well as further guidelines, are available at <https://cacatholic.org/elections>.

- When neither the California Catholic Conference nor an (arch)diocese has taken a public position on a specific measure, a parish or Catholic organization should not do so without previous consultation with the bishop.
- Granting the use of church facilities to supporting or opposing groups should rarely be allowed. Only with the specific permission of the diocesan bishop and the local pastor should church facilities be used for signature gathering to place an initiative on the ballot.
- Although churches have no jurisdiction over public sidewalks and other public property in their vicinities, church parking is ordinarily private property, and the public has no right to distribute partisan materials thereon. This may be difficult to control, but parish leaders should nevertheless deny permission for any such activity. Lack of enforcement here may be construed as institutional support for partisan activities.
- All public policy materials distributed in parishes must be prepared by the (arch)diocese, the California Catholic Conference (CCC) or the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

In anticipation of the 2024 general election, there are many ballot initiatives current seeking signatures or support. A number of these are of interest to California Catholics. The CA bishops have not approved signature gathering through parishes, schools or ministries for any of these initiatives. Once ballot initiatives have qualified for the ballot, the CCC, in consultation with the CA bishops, will offer guidance on the ballot propositions based on Catholic social teaching and our pursuit of the common good.