



Ohio Ballot Issues

November 2009

"To love someone is to desire that person's good and to take effective steps to secure it. Besides the good of the individual, there is a good that is linked to living in society: the common good."

"[The common good] is the good of 'all of us', made up of individuals, families and intermediate groups who together constitute society. It is a good that is sought not for its own sake, but for the people who belong to the social community and who can only really and effectively pursue their good within it. To desire the common good and strive towards it is a requirement of justice and charity."

"The more we strive to secure a common good corresponding to the real needs of our neighbors, the more effectively we love them."

CARITAS IN VERITATE: ON INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN CHARITY AND TRUTH,
POPE BENEDICT XVI, PARAGRAPH 7, JUNE 29, 2009

The Catholic Conference of Ohio encourages voters to carefully consider the three statewide Issues that are on the November 3, 2009 ballot.

Each of us has a responsibility to carefully and prudently discern public policies to determine whether they are morally sound, well conceived, and practical. People of good will may differ regarding specific responses to compelling social problems, but we cannot differ on our moral obligation to help build a more just and peaceful world through promoting the *common good*.

General Ballot Reflection Questions

1. Will passage of an issue promote the value and dignity of the human person and advance the common good of persons in the state, especially the poor and vulnerable?
2. Is the issue needed and well conceived?
3. Does the issue reflect a change that should be addressed in the state constitution (as opposed to an issue that ought to be addressed through the legislative process)?

Issue 1

To Authorize the State to Issue Bonds to Compensate Veterans of the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan, and Iraq Conflicts Constitutional Amendment

Issue 1 authorizes the state to issue up to two hundred million dollars of bonds to provide compensation to veterans of the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan, and Iraq conflicts, and for the administration of this compensation fund.

The state would provide stipends of \$100 a month up to a total of \$1,000 for Ohio veterans who served in the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan, and Iraq Conflicts.

The state would provide stipends of \$50 a month up to a total of \$500 for Ohio veterans who served elsewhere during the conflicts.

Family members of qualified, deceased Ohio veterans could apply for a \$5,000 death benefit.

Certain survivors will receive the same compensation that the person who served in the armed forces would have received, if that person dies or is designated as missing in action or held in enemy captivity.

Pro Arguments

- Issue 1 extends a much-deserved 'thank you' to Ohio's servicemen, servicewomen, and their families. These bonuses would not only show our state's veterans that Ohio appreciates their service, but also help them transition from the military back to civilian life once their tours of duty are complete.
- Continues a longstanding Ohio tradition of supporting veterans. Over the years, Ohio voters approved constitutional amendments to give bonuses to soldiers returning home from World War I, World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War.

Con Arguments

- Issue 1 authorizes the government to spend more in bond money. Economic conditions are poor. While this may be a worthwhile and noble endeavor, the state of Ohio should not be going further into debt.
- Authorizes \$200 million in new debt. This money would have to be paid back in the future by Ohioans. Without Issue 1, taxpayers who have suffered during the economic downturn can retain this money.

- Proposes low levels of reimbursement. Bonus levels appear more symbolic than substantive. The federal government should provide better compensation to soldiers.

Church Teaching

Catholic Social Teachings call us to appreciate and honor the sacrifices and contributions made by those who serve in the military. In the *Catechism*, those who are sworn to serve their country in the armed forces are called *servants of the security and freedom of nations*. "If they carry out their duty honorably, they truly contribute to the common good of the nation and the maintenance of peace." (2310).

The *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* states that those who defend the security and freedom of a country, in the spirit of legitimate defense, "*make an authentic contribution to peace*." (502).

Focus Question

Is Issue 1 affordable, and will passage sufficiently honor and help servicemen, servicewomen and their families?



Catholic Conference of Ohio Position

A voter's position on Issue 1 involves a prudential judgment where persons of good will may differ as to the specifics of this proposal.

The bishops truly appreciate the sacrifices made by the men and women who serve our country in defending freedom and peace. Bonus pay can be a worthwhile way to express gratitude and appreciation. We are especially proud of the many Catholic war veterans who have honorably served in the military.

The Catholic Bishops of Ohio are not opposed to passage of Issue 1.

Issue 2

To Create the Ohio Livestock Care Standards Board Constitutional Amendment

Issue 2 would require the state to create the *Livestock Care Standards Board* to prescribe standards for animal care and well-being. The standards are intended to maintain food safety, encourage locally grown and raised food, and protect Ohio farms and families.

The Board would establish standards after they considered agricultural best-management practices, biosecurity, disease prevention, animal morbidity/mortality data, food safety practices, and the protection of local, affordable food supplies.

The bi-partisan Board would be comprised of thirteen members with expertise in farming, animal care, and food safety issues. It would be chaired by the director of the state department that regulates agriculture.

Pro Arguments

- Issue 2 keeps control of agriculture under the guidance of Ohio experts, including family farmers, food safety experts, veterinarians and consumers.
- Provides an opportunity for Ohio to lead the way in regulating safe food production and ensuring the care and well being of livestock.
- Seeks to address concerns that may surface in a possible 2010 Ohio constitutional ballot initiative that would make it a criminal offense to confine hens in certain cages, pigs in gestation crates, and calves in veal crates. Such an initiative passed in California in 2008.

It is feared that such an Ohio initiative in 2010 will foster misinformation, harmfully disrupt livestock farms, artificially drive up the cost of animal products and restrict consumer choice and food access.

The *Livestock Care Standards Board* will ensure that livestock confinement practices in Ohio are appropriately regulated and humane, thereby making future initiatives in this area less necessary.

- Many boards are currently authorized within the Ohio Constitution. Placements of boards within the Constitution reflect the importance of their mission, and need for nonpartisan actions. Such is the case for constitutionally creating this *Standards* board.

Con Arguments

- Issue 2 puts the economic interests of factory farms ahead of the welfare of farm animals.
- Furthers the interests of agribusiness which supports this amendment to prevent certain animal care reforms proposed by national animal rights organizations.
- The proposed Livestock Board should not be in the State Constitution. Amending the Ohio Constitution should be reserved for significant issues that affect the rights of all Ohioans.

Church Teaching

In the Ohio Catholic bishops' statement, *Life on the Land* (1998), the bishops encourage each of us to listen to the needs and concerns of our state's farmers so that food security, environmental stewardship, just treatment of all in the agricultural system and the broadest participation of all Ohioans in the agricultural sector can be achieved.

In the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' statement, *For I Was Hungry and You Gave Me Food* (2003), the bishops call for the careful regulation and monitoring of confined animal feeding so that environmental risks are minimized and animals are treated as creatures of God.

Focus Question

Will the creation of a Livestock Standards Board within Ohio's constitution sufficiently ensure the humane treatment of livestock, food safety, environmental stewardship, and support for farm families?



Catholic Conference of Ohio Position

A voter's position on Issue 2 involves a prudential judgment where persons of good will may differ as to the specifics of this proposal.

While there is ongoing debate regarding livestock care standards, there are many farm families in Ohio who responsibly and humanely provide food through confined livestock operations.

Regardless of one's position on Issue 2, it is vital for Ohio to have an appropriately regulated and enforced set of animal care and safe food standards, while still assuring affordable and accessible food for all.

The Catholic Bishops of Ohio support passage of Issue 2.

Issue 3

To Allow for One Casino Each in Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, and Toledo and Distribute to All Ohio Counties a Tax on the Casinos. Constitutional Amendment

Issue 3 will amend Ohio's Constitution to authorize only one casino facility within each of the cities of Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, and Toledo. It will levy a fixed tax of 33% of gross casino revenue received.

The casino tax will be distributed as follows:

- 51% among all 88 counties in proportion to such counties' respective populations.
- Half of each county's distribution will go to its largest city if that city's population is above 80,000.
- 34% among all public school districts.
- 5% among all host cities.
- 3% to the Ohio casino control commission.
- 3% to the Ohio state racing commission fund.
- 2% to a state law enforcement training fund.
- 2% to a state problem gambling and addictions fund.

Each initial licensed casino operator must pay a single \$50,000,000 fee to be used for state job training purposes and make a minimum initial investment of \$250,000,000 in its facility.

The casinos may operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The casino facilities will be subject to all state and local laws and provisions related to health and building codes. However, no local zoning, land use laws, or similar provisions shall prohibit the development or operation of the casinos at the designated sites.

Issue 3 will create the *Ohio casino control commission* that will license and regulate casino operators, management companies, key employees, gaming-related vendors, and all gaming authorized by this constitutional provision.

Pro Arguments

- Issue 3 creates first-class casinos that will provide 34,000 new Ohio jobs – jobs that can't be outsourced.
- Will produce \$11 billion in economic impact over five years and generate \$651 million a year in tax revenue to be shared by all 88 counties, the eight largest cities, and every Ohio public school district.
- Provides \$200 million for state job training programs and mandate at least \$1 billion in new private investment to be spent on new casino facilities.
- Has no impact on the conduct of the state lottery, bingo, or charitable gaming.
- Keeps money and tax revenues in Ohio. Over \$1 billion leaves Ohio each year when Ohioans travel to neighboring states' gambling facilities.
- Increases tax revenues. Casinos will tax higher than most all other Ohio businesses. Under Issue 3, casino operators are required to pay a 33 percent tax on all gross casino revenues on top of the other taxes businesses usually pay.

Con Arguments

- Ohio voters said NO to casino gambling four times over the past several years.
- Issue 3 represents another attempt to hijack Ohio's Constitution and create a monopoly for out-of-state owners to build casinos only in Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus and Toledo.
- Promotes addictive behavior that harms families and seduce gamblers, especially those with lower incomes. Gamblers can quickly lose large amounts of money within casinos. Studies have indicated that the problems of gambling addiction double when gambling opportunities are placed within 50 miles of the gambler.
- Will further incidents of crime (substance abuse, prostitution, assault and battery, etc.). Such crimes often increase around casinos.
- Misuses the Ohio Constitution. The Constitution should not be used as a tool for private companies to set up exclusive monopolies, take money out of Ohio, and exempt themselves from local zoning ordinances. The gambling owners will reap extensive monetary gain and have a constitutionally protected monopoly in the State.
- The amendment is not well written. It creates debate on the possible effect of the constitutional amendment on charitable gaming. Many questions remain as to whether Issue 3 *may* ban all other casino gaming, including "casino nights" offered by churches, fraternal organizations or other charities, and whether casinos *may* be exempted from paying taxes on profits from cash wagering.
- Unnecessarily favors casino operators. Casino operators would pay just 33% of their gross profits in taxes, keeping 67% for themselves. Ohio's casinos would pay a lower percentage of their profits than casinos in most other states. Ohio's legislature would have no power to force casinos to pay a higher tax rate.

Church Teachings

Games and schemes of chance are not in themselves contrary to justice. The Church recognizes, however, that a variety of social ills can become associated with any form of gambling. According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, forms of gambling "become morally unacceptable when they deprive someone of what is necessary to provide for his needs and those of others. The passion for gambling risks becoming an enslavement."

Previous Catholic Conference of Ohio statements on gambling made a distinction between charitable bingo and casino gambling. While there are a variety of social ills that can also be associated with charitable bingo, the gambling stakes are much lower and 100% of the proceeds are used for charitable purposes. The Catholic Bishops of Ohio would prefer, and in fact have encouraged, church institutions to raise needed funds through alternative forms of fundraising, where feasible.

Focus Question

Is Issue 3 well conceived and in the long-term best interest of the people of Ohio?



Catholic Conference of Ohio Position

A voter's position on Issue 3 involves a prudential judgment where persons of good will may differ as to the specifics of this proposal.

The Catholic Conference of Ohio has opposed all previous statewide casino and slot machine initiatives. The Catholic Bishops in Ohio continue to believe casino gambling, as proposed in Issue 3, is not in the best moral, social and economic interests of the citizens of our state. More persons and families will be seduced into financial hardship, rather than helped. More societal problems will be aggravated, rather than improved.

Furthermore, Issue 3 appears to us to be poorly written and overindulgent toward the gambling interests of private business. Since Issue 3 is a Constitutional amendment, voters have no recourse for fixing such concerns except to pass another Constitutional amendment. This flawed casino proposal should not be enacted into our Ohio Constitution.

The Catholic Bishops of Ohio are opposed to Issue 3.

Official Explanations and Arguments for all the Issues can be found on the Ohio Secretary of State's Website:

<http://www.sos.state.oh.us>

The Catholic Conference of Ohio is the official representative of the Catholic Church in public matters affecting the Church and the general welfare of the citizens of Ohio. This is accomplished by representing the Church's positions before the Ohio General Assembly, various state departments, agencies and other organizations.

