



# CIVILIZE IT

## A Better Kind of Politics

*The USCCB encourages all Catholics to serve as ambassadors of civility and to exercise our right and responsibility of political engagement thoughtfully and prayerfully.*

### THIS ELECTION TAKE THE PLEDGE TO EXERCISE:

#### **CIVILITY:**

*Recognize the human dignity of those with whom we disagree; treat others with respect, and rise above attacks.*

#### **CLARITY:**

*Root our political viewpoints in the Gospel and a well-formed conscience involving prayer, conversation, study and listening. Speak out when we witness language that disparages others' dignity, while seeking to understand others' experiences.*

#### **COMPASSION:**

*Encounter others with a tone which affirms that we honor their dignity and invites others to do the same. Presume others' best intentions and listen with empathy. Strive to understand before seeking to be understood.*

[usccb.civilizeit.org](http://usccb.civilizeit.org)

# ELECTION 2024

## OUR CATHOLIC CALL TO RESPONSIBLE CITIZENSHIP

As Catholics, we are called not just to seek personal holiness, but to be active participants in the life of our community and to promote the common good. This entails advocating for human dignity, addressing issues of poverty and inequality, protecting our common earthly home, and bringing the teachings of Christ and the power of faith to bear on the many other challenges facing our society. **One of the most important ways we do this is through voting.** With the 2024 general election rapidly approaching, now is a good time to review Church teaching on political involvement for Catholics, including:

- Catholics have a moral obligation to be responsible citizens and be politically engaged on a broad range of issues.
- Parishes and other church organizations can encourage members to get involved in the electoral process: to register, to become informed on issues, to vote, and to contact their representatives.
- The Catholic Church does not endorse candidates for public office or otherwise engage in partisan politics.
- The Catholic Church does at times weigh in on public policy issues which impact fundamental Catholic values, often through statements made by our bishops. **See the following pages of this flyer for voting recommendations on ballot initiatives in the upcoming election from the Washington State Catholic Conference (WSCC), representing the Catholic bishops of Washington State.**

Additional information can be found in "Forming Consciences For Faithful Citizenship" from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops  
For an electronic copy, scan the QR code:



### November 5th General Election - Key Dates:

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|-------------------------|--|
| Now until<br>October 28 | Go online to <a href="https://voter.votewa.gov">voter.votewa.gov</a> to check the status of your registration, make address changes, or register to vote in Washington for the first time. |
| October 18              | Start of 18-day voting period (through Election Day, Nov. 5). Ballots are mailed out and Accessible Voting Units (AVUs) are available at voting centers.                                   |
| October 28              | Deadline for online and mail registrations. Register to vote in person during business hours and any time before 8:00 p.m. on Election Day.  |
| November 5              | Deadline for Washington State voter registration or updates (in person only).  |
| November 5              | General Election - Deposit your ballot in an official drop box or postmarked by 8 p.m. on Election Day.  |

# Vote NO on Initiative 2117



**Washington State Catholic Conference**  
The Public Policy Voice of the Bishops of Washington State

Initiative 2117 would repeal the current Climate Commitment Act (CCA), the state's climate bill passed in 2021, and bars implementation of any similar programs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the future.

The CCA sets a limit on the total carbon emissions in the state with the goal of reducing total greenhouse gas emissions by 95% by 2050. Businesses who produce more than 25,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions must buy allowances equal to their excess greenhouse gas emissions. Allowances are available when other companies lower emissions. The allowances can be obtained through auctions hosted by the state department of ecology or on a secondary market similar to a stock market.

The CCA program provides an incentive to lower emissions by allowing businesses that reduce emissions to sell their remaining carbon emission allowance permits to other companies. Proceeds from the auctions are used across the state, focusing on projects that enhance clean transportation, improve air quality, and support energy-efficient infrastructures. At least 35% of the funds are directed towards projects benefiting overburdened communities, with a significant focus on environmental justice.

## **WHAT INITIATIVE PROPONENTS SAY**

CCA has raised Washington's gas prices by 50 cents/gallon. Costs of the program are passed on to consumers, raising prices for necessities such as food and other items in the supply chain.

## **WHAT INITIATIVE OPPONENTS SAY**

Instead of a fee on pollution being paid by the largest contributors, repeal would shift the burden of paying for the impacts of pollution onto communities, workers, and families. CCA raised \$1.8 billion in its first year. If successful the repeal will strip away investments of CCA funds in community priorities across the state — from programs that lower costs for Washingtonians to transit service to wildfire prevention programs.

## **WSCC POSITION: VOTE NO ON INITIATIVE 2117**

While opponents of the CCA raise some valid points about costs of the program being passed on to consumers, with negative impacts on low-income individuals and non-profits, such concerns can be addressed more effectively through amendments and appropriate use of the proceeds from the program than through a complete bar to necessary climate action.

The impacts of climate change are also hardest on people living with lower incomes. Eliminating the act and its long-term impacts on climate change to address one factor causing higher prices is not a sound solution. Pope Francis wrote in 2015, "there is an urgent need to develop policies so that, in the next few years, the emission of carbon dioxide and other highly polluting gases can be drastically reduced, for example, substituting for fossil fuels and developing sources of renewable energy." Washington state's Climate Commitment Act sets a national example for responding to this call, one we cannot afford to dismantle. Please vote NO on I-2117.

For more information go to: <https://www.wacatholics.org/stay-informed/vote-no-on-initiative-2117>

# Vote NO on Initiative 2124



**Washington State Catholic Conference**  
The Public Policy Voice of the Bishops of Washington State

Initiative 2124 would amend WA Cares, the state's long term care program, to allow all workers to opt out of the payroll tax that funds the program.

Beginning in 2023, WA Cares added a 0.58% tax on the paychecks of Washington workers to pay for long-term care for qualifying applicants. Starting in 2026, those who qualify can access the long-term care benefit, up to a lifetime maximum of \$36,500. The money can be used for caretaking equipment, medication, meals and other expenses for individuals who are older, injured, or disabled. There are a few exemptions from the tax, including people who work in Washington but live out of state, active-duty military, people with non-immigrant work visas and veterans with certain disabilities. People who purchased private long-term care insurance could also opt out until Dec. 2022.

## **WHAT INITIATIVE PROPONENTS SAY**

The initiative allows workers to choose whether to participate in the program. The law has been criticized since its enactment in 2019, in part because too few people who are paying into the program will actually use the full benefit. Proponents argue that while 70% of participants are estimated to need the benefit, that leaves 30% paying in without receiving services. Proponents also argue that the lifetime total is too small to be useful when compared to the potential costs of long-term care. Proponents are also concerned about the sustainability of the program and the high likelihood that a higher tax will be needed in the future.

## **WHAT INITIATIVE OPPONENTS SAY**

The initiative would effectively repeal WA Cares since higher earners who pay more into the program (because it is a percentage of overall pay) are more likely to opt out. As with any insurance, the fewer people in the pool, the higher the costs to those who are left, which in this case would be lower wage earners who are also unlikely to be able to afford private long-term care insurance. Opponents also note that Washington has no income tax and many regressive taxes that harm those with the least income. This program, on the other hand, ensures that everyone pays proportionate to their income.

## **WSSCC POSITION: Vote NO on Initiative 2124**

I-2124 is a life issue. Lower income individuals who are unable to afford private long-term care insurance are more likely to feel pressure to engage in the cheaper option of assisted suicide rather than leave their families with bills for care.

We pay many taxes for services we may never use. For example, our taxes pay for fire and emergency services most of us hope to never have to utilize. Helping our fellow residents weather the challenges of serious illness or aging is something we do as members of a community who recognize that those with more resources have a responsibility to help ensure those with less are not left to suffer needlessly. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds us, a person "should regard the external things that he legitimately possesses not only as his own but also as common in the sense that they should be able to benefit not only him but also others." (CCC 2404). We also acknowledge that government should not perform all functions in a society, but it should step in where it is best positioned to protect the dignity and sanctity of life. In the case of long-term care insurance, the market does not provide an option for the poor, so government involvement is needed.

WA Cares may need revising to ensure its sustainability, but elimination of the program in its entirety by gutting its funding is a poor substitute for meaningful policy discussions about the care needs of people with limited means.

For more information go to: <https://www.wacatholics.org/stay-informed/vote-no-on-i-2124>