

# Platforms Compared

Washington (NC) -- Following is the first installment of a four-part comparison of the 1984 Democratic and Republican party platforms and the U.S. Catholic Conference's 1984 recommendations to both parties' platform committees. The USCC is public policy arm of the U.S. bishops. Its recommendations were presented in testimony to the Democratic platform committee by Auxiliary Bishop Eugene A. Marino of Washington and to the Republican Party platform committee by Auxiliary Bishop John E. McCarthy of Galveston-Houston, Texas.

Excerpts from the USCC platform testimony and the platforms, listed in alphabetical order as presented in the USCC recommendations, were prepared by Liz S. Armstrong, National Catholic News Service national affairs writer.

The series will continue weekly in the Courier-Journal.

## ABORTION

### U.S. Catholic Conference:

"Abortion directly destroys an unborn human being and thus violates the right to life. A legal system which permits abortion contradicts the principle that human rights are inherent and inalienable. Thus the 1973 Supreme Court decisions on abortion, and subsequent decisions which rely on them, should be reversed, while society's resources should be directed to solving the problems for which abortion is mistakenly proposed as a solution.

"Restoration of legal protection to the lives of the unborn requires an amendment to the Constitution.

"...Public funding policies should encourage childbirth over abortion. Specifically, we oppose all public funding of abortion in programs for medical care and other services....

"We support legal equity for women and reject efforts to link abortion 'rights' to this objective.

"Women's equity measures should be scrutinized and, where necessary, amended so that their legitimate and important goals are not exploited as vehicles for abortion and abortion funding."

### Democratic platform:

"There can be little doubt that a Supreme Court chosen by Ronald Reagan would radically restrict constitutional rights and drastically reinterpret existing laws. Today the fundamental right of a woman to reproductive freedom rests on the votes of six members of the Supreme Court -- five of whom are over 75. That right could easily disappear during a second term.

"The Democratic Party recognizes reproductive freedom as a fundamental human right. We therefore oppose government interference in the reproductive decisions of

The Courier-Journal provides this comparison of the platforms of the two major political parties and the positions of the U.S. Catholic Conference on issues of interest to Catholic voters. It is not intended to support any candidate or any political party but merely as helpful background information.

Americans, especially government interference which denies poor Americans their right to privacy by funding or advocating one or a limited number of reproductive choices only. We fully recognize the religious and ethical concerns which many Americans have about abortion. But we also recognize the belief of many Americans that a woman has a right to choose whether and when to have a child. The Democratic Party supports the 1973 Supreme Court decision on abortion rights as the law of the land and opposes any constitutional amendment to restrict or overturn that decision. We support a continuing federal interest in developing strong local family planning and family life education programs and medical research aimed at reducing the need for abortion."

"A top priority of a Democratic administration will be ratification of the unamended Equal Rights Amendment."

### Republican platform:

"The unborn child has a fundamental individual right to life which cannot be infringed. We therefore reaffirm our support for a human life amendment to the Constitution, and we endorse legislation to make clear that the 14th Amendment's protections apply to unborn children. We oppose the use of public revenues for abortion and will eliminate funding for organizations which advocate or support abortion. We commend the efforts of those individual and religious and private organizations that are providing positive alternatives to abortion by meeting the physical, emotional and financial needs of pregnant women and offering adoption services where needed."

"We applaud President Reagan's fine record of judicial appointments, and we reaffirm our support for the appointment of judges at all levels of the judiciary who respect traditional family values and the sanctity of innocent human life.

"As part of our commitment to the family and our opposition to abortion, we will eliminate all U.S. funding for organizations which in any way support abortion or research on abortion methods."

"The Republican Party has an historic commitment to equal rights for women. Republicans pioneered the right of women to vote, and our party was the first major party to advocate equal pay for equal work, regardless of sex."

### ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT

#### U.S. Catholic Conference:

"Our pastoral letter, 'The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response,' condemns the counter-city or counter-population use of nuclear weapons; rejects the notion of waging limited nuclear war, because of the risk of escalation to all-out nuclear war; and questions the moral

acceptability of policies that contemplate the initiation of nuclear war to repel a conventional attack, as is the case in NATO strategy.

"Our judgment of 'strictly conditional moral acceptance of nuclear deterrence' means that the deployment of certain kinds of new weapons systems not clearly essential to deterrence should be avoided. Moreover, we recommend a bilateral, verifiable and negotiated halt to all new nuclear weapons deployment, while urging intensified negotiations to achieve reductions in the nuclear arsenals of the superpowers and a comprehensive test ban treaty."

### Democratic platform

"There is no higher goal for the Democratic Party than assuring the national security of the United States. This means a strong national defense, vigorous pursuit of nuclear arms control, and a foreign policy dedicated to advancing the interests of America and the forces of freedom and democracy....

"The Democratic Party is committed to a strong national defense.

"In an age of 50,000 nuclear weapons, however, nuclear arms control and reductions are also essential to our security.

"Democrats believe that mutual and verifiable controls on nuclear arms can, and must be, a serious integral part of national defense.

"Our ultimate aim must be to abolish all nuclear weapons in a world safe for peace and freedom."

"The Democratic president will...terminate production of the MX missile and the B-1 bomber (and) prohibit the production of nerve gas...."

### Republican platform

"We seek to deflect Soviet policy away from aggression and toward peaceful international conduct. To that end, we will seek substantial reductions in nuclear weapons, rather than merely freezing nuclear weapons at their present dangerous level.

"To keep the peace, the Reagan-Bush administration is offsetting the Soviet military threat with the defensive power of the (NATO) alliance. We are deploying Pershing II and cruise missiles.

"Our military strength exists for the high moral purpose of deterring conflict, not initiating war. The deterrence of aggression is ethically imperative.

"Maintaining a technological superiority, the historical foundation of our policy of deterrence, remains essential.

"We will continue to modernize our deterrent capability, while negotiating for verifiable arms control.

"Americans, while caring deeply about arms control, realize it is not an end in itself....

"The first duty of government is to provide for the common defense.

"Our nuclear arms are a vital element of the free world's security system.

"We enthusiastically support the development of non-nuclear, space-based defensive systems to protect the United States by destroying incoming missiles."

NEXT: Crime to employment and income

## and Opinions

### When Did Reagan Act On Abortion?

#### EDITOR:

What has happened to the old maxim that "actions speak louder than words"? The action I am referring to is that of Gov. Ronald Reagan signing into law in California on June 15, 1967, a bill permitting abortion on demand. In that year, there were 518 legal abortions in that state; the total performed from 1968 to 1980 was 1,444,778, of which obviously some had been done after the Supreme Court's decision in 1973.

In the 1960s, I had been appointed by Bishop Sheen as co-chairman of the diocesan Right to Life Committee and became aware of the new California law, but only recently have been researching what happened there. Two very sympathetic biographies of Reagan by newspaper political correspondents supply interesting details. The bill passed the state Senate on June 6 by a 21-17 vote and in the Assembly on June 13 by 48-30, in neither case by enough to override a veto. The governor's press secretary (now a principal political adviser) immediately suggested a press release announcing that he would sign the bill and thereby "avert a new ground of pressure from anti-abortionists."

When the bill was signed by Reagan surrounded by its sponsors at a subsequent press conference, he "jokingly threatened to veto it."

Apparently, even abortion was a "joking matter."

At the same time the 1970 statistics were issued, Reagan expressed surprise at the large number of abortions on the so-called "mental health" grounds. But when signing the bill, he had told the press that "prognosis of mental health would be easier to exaggerate ... and would allow certain leeway for a doctor who wanted" to perform an abortion. However, in the remaining years of his term as governor there is no record of any proposal by him to revise the law.

The earliest reference in either biography to any Reagan opposition to abortion is a July 27, 1979, statement of support for Congressman Hyde's proposed constitutional amendment at a time when Reagan was already campaigning for the presidential nomination. And at a time, incidentally, when Right to Life groups were in disagreement on the strategy and language of such an amendment.

In his own autobiography, "Where's the Rest of Me," published in 1965 in preparation for his first campaign for the governorship, no reference is made to abortion, although the so-called liberalization legislation had been introduced each session since 1960 and the hierarchy, as well as Catholic doctors, psychiatrists, hospitals and lawyers had mounted what was called "a tremendous campaign of opposition."

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### Genocide Blame Not Ours

#### EDITOR:

Responding to my letter of July 27, John Milich was in error on several points.

First, his statement that the genocide in Cambodia "would probably never have happened at all" had the United States not been involved there is merely conjecture.

The fact was we were involved but dishonored our commitment by cutting off military aid to Indochina that was necessary to stop a Communist takeover.

This in turn led to a Communist victory, genocide, loss of freedom and the "boat people." Mr. Milich sidestepped the Cambodian genocide issue by referring to the "documentation" of left-leaning William Shawcross in his book.

Mr. Shawcross, a British journalist reporting from Washington during the Indochina War, was severely criticized by the British weekly, The Economist, which said, "This is not history ... Mr. Shawcross's book is free of (the right) questions and free of answers too. It is too busy doing something else to be considered even remotely fair."

Another error in John Milich's letter is his claim that I see communism as the only political force capable of evil. This, of course, is not true but what other political force can compare with the military might of communism?

What other political force has violated human rights as

brutally and consistently as communism has since it took power in 1917?

On the other hand, what other political force has helped as many people as the United States? Remember the Marshall plan?

Therefore it is our moral duty to stop communism before it imposes its will on the rest of the world.

We don't have to match the Soviet Union bomb for bomb (they're too far ahead) but we can use available technology to stop their bombs if they ever decide to "first strike" us.

Most importantly, we can practice our religion and pray for those in Soviet labor and extermination camps who are denied the right to practice their religion (and write letters).

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### Say Rosary For Peace

#### EDITOR:

I am writing this as a promotion of one of the most beautiful forms of prayer, the rosary. We are living in a world which has promoted adulterous sex and violence. We are also faced with the living horror of nuclear war. Each of us should feel threatened about these things.

But let's look back for a moment to the time period of May through October 1917 when Our Blessed Mother appeared to the three shepherd children at Covada Iria in Fatima. Her message was to pray the rosary daily (or as much as possible). She said



that if the world didn't change its ways then we would all be blown up, now a very real threat.

Even if we could fit in one decade a day we certainly would not be any worse off than we are. So say your

rosary (or your decade) for your sake, for my sake and for the sake of our world in general.

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## Guidelines

The Courier-Journal welcomes your opinions. Letters must bear the writer's signature, full address and telephone number. They should be sent to Opinion, Courier-Journal, 114 S. Union St., Rochester, N.Y. 14607.

Opinions should be brief, typed, double-spaced, no longer than 1 1/2 pages.

We routinely condense letters, edit offensive words and libelous statements, and reserve the right to reject letters. Generally speaking, however, only limited grammatical corrections will be made and the letters will reflect the writer's own style.