

Platforms Compared

Washington (NC) -- The following is the fourth 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.

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.

MASS MEDIA

U.S. Catholic Conference:

"Communication media should be responsive to the public interest. We reject the application of 'marketplace' economic thinking to the telecommunications industry, for this has the effect of widening the gap between the information-rich and the information-poor in society. Specifically, we oppose legislative initiatives in Congress which would remove the accountability of broadcasters and the owners of cable systems to the communities they are licensed or franchised to serve.

"We support the concept of universal telephone service at a cost which all Americans can afford. While we oppose government control of the content of the mass media, we support reasonable common-carrier regulations to restrict the use of these vehicles in making available to the young, in particular, indecent or pornographic materials....

Democratic platform:

"For its part, when added to the traditional educational institutions of family, school and church, television has enormous promise as a teacher.... We must ask how television can help children and why commercial broadcasters do so little programming for children today despite their legal responsibility as 'public trustees' of the airwaves granted them.

"Telecommunications is the infrastructure of the information age. Nationwide access to these networks is becoming crucial to full participation in...society and economy.... Proper regulation of telecommunications is critical. We must encourage competition while preventing regulatory decisions which substantially increase basic telephone rates and which threaten to throw large numbers of low-income, elderly or rural people off the telecommunications network.

"...Social and cultural principles must be as much a part of communications policy as a commitment to efficiency, innovation and competition."

Republican platform:

"Republicans applaud the information explosion. We urge our schools to educate for the ever-changing demands of society and to resist using these innovations as substitutes for reasoning, logic and mastery of basic skills.

"The Republican Party has deep concern about gratuitous sex and violence in the entertainment media, both of which contribute to the problem of crime against children and women.

"We and the vast majority of Americans are repulsed by pornography. We will vigorously enforce constitutional laws to control obscene materials which degrade everyone, particularly women, and depict the exploitation of children."

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.

REGIONAL CONFLICTS IN THE WORLD

(1) Central America

U.S. Catholic Conference:

"...The United States should play a creative diplomatic role in supporting dialogue leading to cessation of hostilities, a negotiated end to the conflicts, and an internationally guaranteed process of political and social reform and economic reconstruction. Under no reasonably foreseeable circumstances can direct intervention of military personnel in the region on the part of the United States or any other outside power be justified.

"We have consistently supported substantial economic assistance for the countries of Central America. While recognizing that military assistance is a dimension of the United States presence there, we continue to insist that the principal U.S. contribution to peace...should be through our diplomatic role. Military assistance to El Salvador should be conditioned upon compliance with established human rights criteria.

"...We oppose covert aid to forces seeking to overthrow the present government of Nicaragua by violence. We favor resumption of significant bilateral economic assistance to Nicaragua, conditioned on compliance with established human rights criteria. We urge new efforts at political engagement...."

Democratic platform:

"The changes and upheavals in El Salvador and Nicaragua are homegrown, but they are exacerbated by forces from outside Central America. The undoubted communist influence on these revolutions cannot be nullified by the dispatch of naval and air armadas to the waters off Nicaragua and thousands of troops to the jungles of Honduras. The solution lies with a new policy that fosters social, economic and political reforms that are compatible with our legitimate vital interests while accommodating the equally legitimate forces of change.

"We must terminate our support for the contras and other paramilitary groups fighting in Nicaragua.

"A Democratic president will support the newly elected president of El Salvador...by channeling U.S. aid through him and by conditioning it on the elimination of government-supported death squads and on progress toward...land reform, human rights and serious negotiations with contending forces in El Salvador...."

Republican platform:

"The security and freedom of Central America are indispensable to our own. The entire region, however, is gravely threatened by communist expansion, inspired and supported by the Soviet Union and Cuba.

"Today, democracy is under assault throughout the hemisphere. Marxist Nicaragua threatens not only Costa Rica and Honduras but also El Salvador and Guatemala. The Sandinistas have systematically persecuted free institutions, including synagogue and church, schools, the private sector, the free press, minorities, and families and tribes throughout Nicaragua. We support continued assistance to the democratic freedom fighters in Nicaragua.

"The heroic effort to build democracy in El Salvador has been brutally attacked by communist guerrillas supported by Cuba and the Sandinistas.

"...President Reagan has helped the people of El Salvador defend themselves. Our opponents object to that assistance, citing concern for human rights. We share that concern and...have taken steps to help curb abuses. We have firmly and actively encouraged human rights reform

and results have been achieved. In judicial reform, the murderers of the American nuns in 1980 have been convicted and sentenced...."

(2) Middle East

U.S. Catholic Conference:

"In the Middle East, the quest for peace continues and the relevant parties bear distinct yet interdependent responsibilities:

"First, the international community, especially its principal diplomatic actors, inevitably influences the future of the Middle East. Second, the United Nations is a vital element in any Middle East negotiations and its diplomatic and peacekeeping role will undoubtedly be crucial.... Third, the regional parties, whose conflicting claims to justice are the essence of the political and moral problem there, are the key to peace. Finally, the religious communities with roots in the Middle East must reflect the best of our traditions in supporting the movement for peace with justice for all...."

Democratic platform:

"The Democratic Party believes that the security of Israel and the pursuit of peace in the Middle East are fundamental priorities for American foreign policy.

"The Democratic Party opposes any consideration of negotiations with the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) unless the PLO abandons terrorism (and) recognizes the state of Israel....

"Jerusalem should remain...ever undivided with...access to the holy places for people of all faiths. The Democratic Party recognizes and supports the established status of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. As a symbol of this stand, the U.S. Embassy should be moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem."

Republican platform:

"Republicans reaffirm that the United States should not recognize the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) so long as that organization continues to promote terrorism, rejects Israel's right to exist....

"We pledge to help maintain Israel's qualitative military edge over its adversaries.

"We believe that Jerusalem should remain an undivided city with free and unimpeded access to all holy places by people of all faiths."

(3) Southern Africa

U.S. Catholic Conference:

"South Africa has long been of grave moral concern to the world because of its internal racial policies and its occupation of Namibia-Southwest Africa.... It has become a threat to the entire area of southern Africa....

"U.S. foreign policy and its influence on corporate activity in South Africa should be directed toward needed change in South Africa and in its relations with neighboring states."

Democratic platform:

"A Democratic president will reverse the Reagan administration's failed policy of 'constructive engagement' and strongly and unequivocally oppose the apartheid regime in South Africa. 'The Democratic Party condemns South Africa for unjustly holding political prisoners.

"A Democratic administration will work as well toward legitimate rights of self-determination of the peoples of Namibia...."

Republican platform:

"We are committed to democracy in Africa and to the economic development that will help it flourish.

"The Reagan-Bush administration will continue its vigorous efforts to achieve Namibian independence and the expulsion of Cubans from occupied Angola.

"We reaffirm our commitment to the rights of all South Africans. Apartheid is repugnant. In South Africa, as elsewhere on the continent, we support well-conceived efforts to foster peace, prosperity and stability."

and Opinions

A Loving Remembrance

EDITOR:

For many years I have read "our" newspaper, and have become impressed and so very proud of the people written about and given tribute to in our area.

Today I am writing to all my fellow and neighborly brothers and sisters about a very special person. He died this past summer. This man was a husband to a lovely woman. He was a devoted and proud father to four special children. He honored his mother and father. He enjoyed his grandchildren so much.

This man, in his life, gave to everyone -- the fire department, boy scouts, civil defense, Knights of Columbus, Red Cross, his church. He was stricken and died while performing his duty to his fellow man during a flooding time in Steuben County.

I am his sister-in-law. I want everyone to know how very proud we all are, how much we miss him, and what a great legacy he left us. Don

Gustina of Corning was one of our finest!
Donna McCormick Berry
10 Speer Dr.
Corning, N.Y. 14830

Respect Life, Not Bombs

EDITOR:

October 7 has been designated as Respect Life Sunday. Let us not confuse life with mere existence. When we ignore the quality of life, we are not showing respect for life. To condemn human beings to years of a mere breathing existence is not

showing a respect for life.

Our government continues to spend \$40 million an hour on armaments that can destroy all God's creatures, if used. Is that showing respect for life?

If not used, we are wasting millions on armaments, while in the world, 15 million people are dying of starvation every year, while uncounted millions are victims of malnutrition, eeking out a mere existence on the borderline of life.

When we support such a government, are we showing respect for life?

The millions of dollars we spend on the instruments of death can and should be spent on abolishing the poverty that drives most women to turn to abortion in desperation.

Let us put our tax money where our mouth is. Let us take on the responsibility to seeing that no child is brought up in poverty.

We do not show respect for life when we act as though life began at conception and ended at birth. But that is what we do when we vote for guns instead of using the money to wage war on poverty. We are sanctimonious



"...AND NOW HERE ARE MY CO-ANCHORS WITH AN ANALYSIS OF YOUR LIFE AND A BRIEF RECAP OF YOUR HIDDEN BEHAVIOR..."

criminals. Nationalism and poverty are the two greatest breeders of crime in the world. When we abolish those twin evils,

we will then show respect for life.

Walter O'Hagan
7 Sherman St.
Auburn, N.Y.

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.

Because submitted opinions exceed the space for letters, we publish only original letters addressed to us. We will not use poetry, open letters, or copies of letters sent elsewhere. To ensure diversity, we limit each writer to one letter per month.

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