



CAN FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What is the Catholic Advocacy Network, and why does it exist?

A: The Catholic Advocacy Network (CAN) is an email-based system that allows Michigan Catholics to stay connected to current issues and communicate instantly with their elected officials. Michigan Catholic Conference (MCC), the official public policy voice of the Church in this state, created the Network in 2005 to help Catholics communicate with their public officials regarding issues of concern to the Church. The Catholic Advocacy Network primarily promotes advocacy at the state level but occasionally encourages members to send messages to their federal officials if requested by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

Q. Does my bishop support the Catholic Advocacy Network?

A: Yes, all the bishops in Michigan's seven dioceses are supportive of the Catholic Advocacy Network. In 2010, each appointed a contact person to work with MCC on expanding outreach efforts in their particular diocese.

Q. Aren't we supposed to keep religion and politics separate?

A. While Thomas Jefferson's phrase about keeping a "wall of separation" between Church and State is often mistakenly interpreted to mean religion has no place in politics, it was written instead to reassure a Baptist group that the government would not interfere in their religious beliefs. The founders were careful not to promote one religion over another, which allowed all religious beliefs to have a place in the public square. As Catholics and Americans, we are not only encouraged but are also obligated to participate in public life.

Q. How do I sign up for the Catholic Advocacy Network?

A. Log onto www.micatholic.org/can/. Press "go" under the "Subscribe to the Catholic Advocacy Network" section and enter your information in the spaces provided. **Please note that you must have an email to be able to enter your information!** You will receive a confirmation email once you have subscribed.

Q. How many emails will I typically receive per year?

A. There are two types of emails you will receive as a member. The first is *Lansing Update*, which informs members of the issues MCC is working on. *Lansing Update* does not require member action, and it is unlikely you would receive more than four a month. The second type is an Action Alert, which provides information on a specific legislative issue and asks members to contact their elected officials in support or opposition to a bill. MCC only sends Action Alerts when member action is critical.

Q. How time consuming will the Catholic Advocacy Network be for me if I sign up?

A. MCC understands your time is limited and tries to respect that with Catholic Advocacy Network messages. An Action Alert provides a brief background on the legislative issue at hand and allows members to take action with just a few clicks of the mouse. You, as a member, can choose which alerts to respond to and how much

time you would like to take to personalize your message. *Lansing Update* is also brief, and, as mentioned above, does not require you to take action.

Q. What kinds of issues will the Catholic Advocacy Network notify me to speak up about?

A. Religious freedom, human life and dignity, children and families, health care, education, economic justice, restorative justice, and immigration are among the important topics addressed by Michigan Catholic Conference staff. MCC addresses the full range of Catholic social teaching through its advocacy efforts.

Q. How do my emails/calls/visits make a difference?

A. With legislative term limits restricting the amount of time they can be in office, lawmakers have less time to get to know citizen concerns than in the past. As a result, they rely on communications from people like you- concerned citizens of Michigan. Through the Catholic Advocacy Network, thousands of Catholic voices have been heard by elected officials at the state and federal level on a variety of issues. Grassroots efforts, combined with Michigan Catholic Conference's advocacy in Lansing, have often helped to advance the common good of the Church in Michigan.

Q. Can I join the Catholic Advocacy Network if I don't have an email address?

A. MCC encourages all Catholics to stay informed and to communicate with their legislators. Unfortunately, without an email, you will be unable to receive Catholic Advocacy Network Action Alerts and other important MCC communications at this time.

Q. How much does it cost to subscribe to the Catholic Advocacy Network?

A. There is no cost to subscribe to the Catholic Advocacy Network or to maintain membership.

Q. Who has access to my name and email address?

A. All individuals who register for the Catholic Advocacy Network will be entered into a statewide database. Michigan Catholic Conference will control this database and use it only for public policy purposes. Your information will never be sold or loaned to any other organizations or causes.

Q. What if I need to edit my information?

A. To edit contact information, send an email to publicpolicy@micatholic.org with the information you would like changed. You will receive an email when the changes have been made.

Q. How can I make sure I receive MCC emails?

A. Be sure to check your junk folder and to allow your email system to receive messages from the sender Catholic Advocacy Network. If you have checked your junk folder and are still not receiving emails, contact MCC.

Q. If I have questions, who should I contact?

A. Call Michigan Catholic Conference at (517) 372-9310 or email Annie Bennett, Communications and Outreach Associate, at abennett@micatholic.org.