

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
The 2006 Elections: Becoming a Global Good Neighbor

As the Global Concerns office for Maryknoll missionaries who live in almost every corner of the world, we are intensely aware that U.S. elections have an enormous impact overseas, as well as in the United States. Thus, we urge you to evaluate the proposals of candidates for the 2006 Congressional elections by asking whether, in addition to their positions on more local issues, they will strive to make the United States a global good neighbor.

The Gospel and Catholic social teaching provide an important lens for making that evaluation. Four important foreign policy issues provide examples:

Peace and national security

Good neighbors work together to make the whole neighborhood and everyone in it secure. The foundation for genuine national security has to be inclusive human security which enhances the dignity of every human life and ensures

- access for all people to food, clean water, healthcare, education and employment;
- authentic freedom, self-determination and full participation in important political and economic decisions that affect their lives; and
- improved international capacity to prevent deadly conflict, provide conflict mediation and promote post-conflict reconciliation.

Ask candidates for their thoughts on issues like the war in Iraq, the size and content of the U.S. military budget, preventive war as a strategy for national security, the use of torture and multilateral security cooperation to assess their commitment to inclusive human security.

Immigration

Good neighbors are hospitable. Though they have doors and even fences, they open them often and generously welcome others, especially those in need. They work hard to make sure that everyone in the neighborhood has a decent place to live and a way to meet basic needs. The bedrock of U.S. immigration policy should be built on hospitality and social justice at home and serious attention to factors driving migration abroad.



Ask candidates for their opinion on U.S. immigration policy and on what should be done to make it possible for people to have a life of dignity and peace at home.

Economic justice and fair trade

Good neighbors work together for a healthy neighborhood economy that benefits everyone. They don't take advantage of others or benefit themselves at their neighbors' expense. Debt cancellation, fair trade agreements that protect workers and the environment and macroeconomic policies that help poor countries provide for the needs of all their people should be implemented to help bring about more fairness and balance in the global neighborhood.

Ask candidates what they will do to make the global economy more just. Ask if they support debt cancellation for poor countries. Ask about their priorities in the negotiation of trade agreements.

The integrity of creation: Global warming

Good neighbors care for their own yards and help maintain the neighborhood park, gardens and playground. They don't pollute the air or ground water; dump their trash on common ground; or drain the local pond for their own use. The U.S. should join with other nations to take seriously the threats associated with global warming and to protect the integrity of creation. Transformation of national energy policy to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and incentives to encourage a change in patterns of non-renewable energy consumption by businesses and households in the U.S. could help us become better global neighbors.

Ask candidates what they would do to respond to global warming; promote alternatives to fossil fuels; reject new investments in nuclear energy; and eliminate exemptions and tax shields that protect polluting industries.

Concrete political decisions like these few can have enormous impact on peace, social and economic justice and the integrity of creation, moving our world closer to or farther from the biblical vision of New Creation. We urge you to enter fully into the 2006 electoral campaign process, asking hard questions of all the candidates across a wide spectrum of concerns so that this election will help the U.S. become a global good neighbor.

For a more detailed analysis of other important international issues that should impact our electoral decisions, go to www.maryknollogc.org.

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns: Peace, Social Justice & Integrity of Creation
P.O. Box 29132 Washington, D.C. 20017
phone: (202)832-1780 fax: (202)832-5195
ogc@maryknoll.org www.maryknollogc.org