

2018 Midterm Elections – U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking Voter Guide

Human Trafficking, also referred to as modern-day slavery, is the use of force, fraud or coercion in an effort to exploit someone for some type of labor or a commercial sex act. The International Labor Organization estimates that there are 40.3 million victims of human trafficking around the world, including 24.9 million in forced labor and 15, 4 million in forced marriage. We have a moral responsibility to end modern slavery around the world, and we must elect candidates who work to eradicate human trafficking through funding for survivor services, increased awareness, harsher penalties for traffickers, and holding all perpetrators, including individuals and businesses, accountable.

The U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking (USCSAHT) hope that you will use this guide as a tool to see how candidates in this next election have responded or plan to respond to the grave sin of human trafficking. Using the quotations from Catholic teaching as a guide, we encourage you to research how candidates for elected office in your area plan to do the hard work necessary to eradicate human trafficking. If their views and plans are in line with Catholic teaching, put a “check” next to the box with their name. If you are unsure of where the candidate stands on the various aspects of trafficking, you might consider raising the issue at a campaign event or writing to them using the contact information on their campaign website.

Part 1: Catholic Social Teaching “Checklist”

Catholic Social Teaching	✓	Candidate’s Policy or Statement
<p>Option for the Poor and Vulnerable</p> <p>✓ “There are other causes which help to explain contemporary forms of slavery. Among these, I think in the first place of <i>poverty</i>, underdevelopment and exclusion, especially when combined with a <i>lack of access to education</i> or <i>scarce, even non-existent, employment opportunities</i>. . . .” Pope Francis (12/8/14)</p>		
<p>Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers</p> <p>✓ “Illegal work, without contracts, working “under the table” is occurring more and more frequently. How it has increased! Illegal work is truly pervasive, and this means that people don’t earn enough to live. This can lead to criminal behavior all the problems that occur in large cities due to these migrations caused by excessive technicization. I refer in particular to the agricultural environment and also to human trafficking in the mining industry. Slavery in mines is a major issue. It involves the use of certain elements in the treatment of minerals — arsenic, cyanide which cause diseases in the population. There is a very great responsibility in this. It all bounces back, it all turns around, everything has a rebound affect against the person himself. It can include human trafficking for purposes of slave labor or prostitution — sources of work to enable survival today.” Pope Francis (7/21/15)</p>		
<p>Dignity of the Human Person</p> <p>✓ “It is precisely on this level that we need to make a good examination of conscience: how many times have we permitted a human being to be seen as an object, to be put on show in order to sell a product or to satisfy an immoral desire? The human person ought never to be sold or bought as if he or she were a commodity. Whoever uses human persons in this way and exploits them, even if indirectly, becomes an accomplice of this injustice.” Pope Francis (12/12/13)</p>		



Catholic Social Teaching	✓	Candidate's Policy or Statement
Rights and Responsibilities ✓ "What is called for, then, is a shared sense of responsibility and firmer political will to gain victory on this front. Responsibility is required towards those who have fallen victim to trafficking in order to protect their rights, to guarantee their safety and that of their families, and to prevent the corrupt and criminals from escaping justice and having the last word over the lives of others. Suitable legislative intervention in the countries of origin, transit and arrival, which will also facilitate orderly migration, can diminish this grave problem." Pope Francis (12/12/13)		
Solidarity ✓ "I invite everyone, in accordance with his or her specific role and responsibilities, to practice acts of fraternity towards those kept in a state of enslavement. Let us ask ourselves, as individuals and as communities, whether we feel challenged when, in our daily lives, we meet or deal with persons who could be victims of human trafficking, or when we are tempted to select items which may well have been produced by exploiting others." Pope Francis (12/8/14)		
Care for Creation ✓ "There has been a tragic rise in the number of migrants seeking to flee from the growing poverty aggravated by environmental degradation. They are not recognized by international conventions as refugees; they bear the loss of the lives they have left behind without enjoying any legal protection whatsoever" Pope Francis (Laudato Si', 25).		

Part 2: Questions for the Candidates

- Survivors of sex and labor trafficking need supportive services if they are to be reintegrated into our communities and become contributing members of society. How would you suggest funding service providers that focus on housing, health care, counseling services, and job training for former victims of both labor and sex trafficking.
- As a consumer, I hope to make informed, moral decisions about the products I buy and the businesses I patronize. Would you support [supply chain transparency](#) measures that would require companies that make goods for sale in the US to be transparent about how they are working to eradicate human trafficking?
- The [Trafficking Victims Protection Act](#) is a core piece of anti-trafficking legislation which has become a cornerstone of efforts to combat trafficking and at home and abroad and protect survivors since it was first passed in 2000. Would you support its reauthorization?
- Undocumented immigrants are particularly vulnerable to both sex and labor trafficking. They often targeted by human traffickers when they are in route to the US as well as after they arrive. Would you support measures to uphold the [rights](#) of immigrant trafficking survivors, including accessing services, without the threat of detention or deportation?

