

CATHOLICS IN THE NEW CONGRESS SPLIT ON ABORTION

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The 119th session of the Congress that began on January 3 is overrepresented by Christians. While most are Protestant, 28 percent are Catholic. Nationwide, Christians make up 62 percent of the population, but they make up 87 percent of the new Congress. Almost three-in-ten Americans are religiously unaffiliated (28 percent), though the three Congressmen who fall into this category make up less than 1 percent of Congress.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has repeatedly said that abortion is the “preeminent priority” for voters. Accordingly, we examined the voting record of every returning Catholic member of Congress, and sought to ascertain the position on this issue as expressed by Catholic freshmen when they were running for office.

We used the scorecard of National Right to Life, and the scorecard of Reproductive Freedom (formerly NARAL), to see how they rated these Catholics. As expected, the results of the pro-life organization and the pro-abortion organization showed wide agreement.

To simplify matters, we will refer only to the National Right to Life scorecard. To see the complete tally of all Catholic members of Congress as scored by both organizations, click [here](#).

In the House of Representatives, there are 126 Catholics: 71 Democrats and 55 Republicans. From our analysis, more Catholic representatives are pro-abortion (70) than are pro-life (54); two can be regarded as moderates.

Six-in-ten (59) Catholic representatives received a score of 0 percent from National Right to Life, and all of them were Democrats. Two scored near zero (both Democrats) and two scored near the middle (one from each Party). There were 44 Catholic representatives who received a 100 percent rating from National Right to Life, and all were Republicans. Nineteen, all freshman, had no scores.

In the Senate, there are 23 Catholics: 13 Democrats and 10 Republicans. From our analysis, more Senators are pro-abortion (14) than are pro-life (8); one, a Republican, can be regarded as a moderate.

Of the 14 Catholic Senators who are pro-abortion—they received a score of 0 percent from National Right to Life—all but one was a Democrat. There were 7 Catholic Senators who received a pro-life score of 100 percent; one was a freshman without a score, though he was endorsed by the Susan B. Anthony List.

The data show how sharply the Parties differ. The Republican Party is overwhelmingly pro-life and the Democrats are overwhelmingly pro-abortion.