

# ELECTION LESSONS FOR PRO-LIFERS

*This is the article that appeared in the December 2023 edition of Catalyst, our monthly journal. The date that prints out reflects the day that it was uploaded to our website. For a more accurate date of when the article was first published, check out the news release, [here](#).*

Election day was a bad day for pro-lifers. They need to learn some lessons if progress is to be made.

It is not easy to win when the pro-life side is outspent by enormous margins, and that is exactly what happened in Ohio, Kentucky and Virginia.

The pro-life side in Ohio was outspent by a margin of \$24.4 million to \$16.3 million. In Kentucky, the figures were \$47.8 million to \$29.2 million, respectively. In Virginia, \$35.2 million was raised by Democrats for the state legislative races, compared to \$27.6 million for the Republicans. When Virginia Republican Party chairman Rich Anderson met with senior members of the Republican National Committee on Columbus Day, asking for help in raising money, he was turned down.

Money is tied to voter turnout, and the Democrats succeeded on that measure in all three states. While money is important, there are lessons that transcend this issue that pro-lifers must grasp.

It is a staple in pro-life circles to say they need to do a better job in messaging. That's true but it belies a bigger problem: their message is wrong.

The fact is the American people will never vote for a complete ban on abortion, and it is about time our side got the message. In Ohio, the law signed by Gov. Mike DeWine in 2019 allowed for no exceptions for rape or incest. In Kentucky, the

law that went into effect after *Roe v. Wade* was overturned allowed for no exceptions.

These laws are a non-starter. Moreover, they play into the hands of demagogues. In Kentucky, the pro-abortion side ran ads saying, "To tell a 12-year-old girl she must have the baby of her stepfather who raped her is unthinkable." Even in Virginia, where the law allowed for exceptions, ads were run saying the pro-life candidates "will take away your rights."

Some may say that if allowing for the usual exceptions didn't work in Virginia, what's wrong with an absolute ban? For one, an absolute ban guarantees failure. Second, as the *Wall Street Journal* put it, Virginia witnessed "razor-edge races [that] hardly amount to a grand rebuke of Gov. [Glenn] Youngkin." In fact, the Democrats lost in key swing districts.

The moral issue is paramount. Is it acceptable for Catholics to vote for a candidate who is not opposed to all abortions? The answer is a qualified yes. If the choice is between candidates who are all in the pro-abortion camp, though not to the same degree, then the candidate who is the least pro-abortion can in good conscience be chosen.

Intent matters as well. If the reason why someone votes for a pro-abortion candidate has nothing to do with his support for abortion—it might have to do with the candidate's support for union rights—then that is also an acceptable reason to vote for such a candidate. If the vote is cast to support abortion, that is illicit.

Consider what Saint John Paul II said in *Evangelium Vitae* about Catholic politicians.

He wrote that "when it is not possible to overturn or completely abrogate a pro-abortion law, an elected official, whose absolute personal opposition to procured abortion was well known, could licitly support proposals aimed at limiting the harm done by such a law and lessening its negative

consequences at the level of general opinion and public morality. This does not in fact represent an illicit cooperation with an unjust law, but rather a legitimate and proper attempt to limit its evil aspects.”

Similarly, as Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (the future Pope Benedict XVI) put it, “When a Catholic does not share a candidate’s stand in favor of abortion and/or euthanasia, but votes for that candidate for other reasons, it is considered remote material cooperation, which can be permitted in the presence of proportionate reasons.”

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has issued statements that mirror what these two popes have said. For example, they have said that in circumstances where all the candidates are pro-abortion, Catholics may vote for the one who is “deemed less likely to advance such a morally flawed position and more likely to pursue other authentic human goods.”

In practical terms, the USCCB is saying that if one of the candidates is pro-abortion but is opposed to forcing doctors to perform abortions and sex-reassignment surgery, and the other pro-abortion candidate wants to do just that, then voting for the former candidate is acceptable.

The choices we are faced with are not always ideal, but prudence dictates that we choose the lesser of two evils (for the reasons Saint John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI enumerated).

The bottom line should be clear—the ultimate goal is the end of abortion. In the process of getting there, however, we should be prepared to get what we can realistically get now and then proceed to get more. Those who take an “all or nothing” stance should be prepared to get nothing. It is better that some lives be saved than none at all.

---

# JESUIT-RUN SCHOOLS BADLY NEED REFORMS

*This is the article that appeared in the December 2023 edition of Catalyst, our monthly journal. The date that prints out reflects the day that it was uploaded to our website. For a more accurate date of when the article was first published, check out the news release, [here](#).*

Jesuit-run colleges and universities have a reputation of intolerance for free speech and a tolerance for pro-abortion clubs on campus. They are in serious need of reform.

In September, the latest report on free speech on college campuses was published by the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression (FIRE), “2024 College Free Speech Rankings.”

For the last several years, four Jesuit-run schools have ranked among the worst in the nation when it comes to respecting freedom of speech: Georgetown University, Fordham University, Boston College and Marquette University. They are still at the bottom of the barrel.

The latest FIRE survey of 248 colleges and universities lists five Catholic schools that achieved a “Poor” rating; the only non-Jesuit school is Duquesne University. Boston College (#229), Marquette (#230), Duquesne (#241), Fordham (#244) and Georgetown (#245) made for an embarrassing cluster of Catholic schools. Georgetown even earned a “Very Poor” rating.

The most intolerant institution of higher education in the nation, coming in last at #248, was Harvard University: it actually earned the lowest score possible, 0.00, meriting the tag, “Abysmal.” Why would anyone who has a serious interest in academic excellence go to such a close-minded school? Graduates may land a good job, but can they think for

themselves?

Some of the key findings in this year's report are disconcerting, if not disgusting.

The schools in the bottom five, which includes Fordham and Georgetown, are not only intolerant of controversial ideas on campus, they succeeded in censoring speech 81 percent of the time.

What subjects set off the speech police the most? Abortion is #1. God forbid a student accepts the findings of science, and agrees with the teachings of the Catholic Church, that life begins at conception. Such speech simply cannot be tolerated by those who fancy themselves as "open-minded."

Turning to the overall data on the 248 schools, as usual it's the left-wing students—they are dogmatically obedient to their professors—who are the most intolerant. "Student opposition to allowing controversial conservative speakers on campus ranged from 57% to 72%, depending on the speaker. In contrast, student opposition to controversial liberal speakers ranged from 29% to 43%."

Incredibly, 45% of today's college students believe that it is okay to block other students from attending a speech—this is up from 37% last year. More than a quarter, 27%, say it is acceptable to engage in violence to stop a speech they don't like—it's up from 20% last year.

Have our colleges become hotbeds of fascism? Some are moving very quickly in that direction.

Importantly, there are some schools that respect free speech. The top five are: Michigan Technological University, Auburn University, University of New Hampshire, Oregon State University and Florida State University.

It might be worthwhile for the alumni of the Jesuit-run

schools cited near the bottom of the free-speech rankings to demand that their school officials meet with administrators of the top five schools—all of which are public universities—to find out what they are doing right.

If these schools are intolerant of free speech in general, they are quite tolerant of pro-abortion speech.

For example, the Law Schools at Boston College, Fordham and Georgetown all have chapters of If/When/How. While its name is deceptive, its goal is not. "Law Students for Reproductive Justice [its previous name] trains and mobilizes law students and new lawyers across the country to foster legal expertise and support for the realization of reproductive justice."

Georgetown is so committed to abortion rights that it has a longstanding undergraduate student club, H\*yas for Choice. It is a "queer affirming" group that provides "safer sex supplies, including condoms, dental dams, lube and emergency contraception on Georgetown University's campus—all of which are provided free of charge and without judgment."

It does not matter that H\*yas for Choice is not endorsed by the school and does not receive funding: It is allowed to operate on campus. If a chapter of the Klan were to seek the same status it would be summarily rejected. That's because the Jesuits who run Georgetown are infinitely more upset about racism than they are the killing of innocent children.

Many of those who send their children to Georgetown say they don't approve of the pro-abortion clubs, but when asked why they do so anyway they reply that their children are likely to land a good job upon graduation. As if they couldn't do that from a Catholic college or university that does not compromise its mission.

Unfortunately, most Catholic institutions of higher learning have strayed from its mission, though none as badly as the Jesuit-run schools. It is up to the parents of high school

students weighing which college to choose to become more vigilant about the true Catholic nature of these schools. It is also incumbent on the alumni to let school administrators know of their concerns.

Too many Catholic colleges and universities are guilty of false advertising. They talk the Catholic talk to the parents of prospective students, but their deeds are quite different.