



Ohio Ballot Issues 2017

There are two statewide issues on the November 7, 2017 ballot. **Issue 1** is a constitutional amendment addressing the rights

of crime victims. **Issue 2** is a voter initiated law-change addressing the cost of prescription drugs purchased by the state of Ohio.

The Catholic Conference of Ohio has taken a neutral position on both issues. We offer these reflections as an aid to one's discernment process.

Prudential Discernment

Each of these issues requires prudential discernment. *"Prudence shapes and informs our ability to deliberate over available alternatives, to determine what is most fitting to a specific context, and to act decisively..."*

"...Catholics may choose different ways to respond to compelling social problems, but we cannot differ on our moral obligation to help build a more just and peaceful world through morally acceptable means, so that the weak and vulnerable are protected and human rights and dignity are defended."

Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship #20, USCCB, 2015

Reflection Questions

1. Will passage of an issue promote the value and dignity of the human person and advance the common good of persons in the state, especially the poor and vulnerable?
2. Is the issue needed?
3. Is the issue well-conceived and clearly stated?
4. If proposed as a constitutional amendment (Issue 1), is this an issue that belongs in Ohio's Constitution? If proposed as an initiated petition (Issue 2), is this a matter that voters, rather than the Ohio legislature, should decide?
5. Does the Issue appear to have a good chance of being implemented and enforced?
6. Are the proponents and opponents of the issue being fair, clear, and transparent in their advocacy around the issue?

State Issue 1

Amends Ohio's Constitution to expand the rights of victims and require that such rights be protected as vigorously as the rights of the accused.

Vote Yes

Would provide crime victims with the following:

- Notification during each step in the legal process;
- The right to be present in the courtroom and have a voice in the judicial process;
- Input into plea bargains as well as financial restitution from the offender, if appropriate;
- Appearance before the court for enforcement of their rights if they are being violated.

Vote No

The problem in Ohio is not the absence of victims' rights, but the lack of a remedy when the government fails to carry out duties owed to victims.

- Ohio law already requires prosecutors to notify victims when the defendant is arrested or eligible for pretrial release, and has established an automated victim notification system;
- Gives victims the right to refuse to turn over potential evidence, which conflicts with our nation's Bill of Rights;
- Ohio should provide additional resources and training toward victim's services, not amend the state Constitution;
- Does not provide for additional resources, and the government remains immune to liability when services are not provided.

Catholic Conference of Ohio's Position

A voter's position on Issue 1 involves a prudential judgment where people of good will may differ as to the specifics of this proposal.

We are keenly aware of the anger, pain and grief experienced by victims of crime and their families. Their sense of loss and outrage can be overwhelming. As Christians, we are called to help victims and their families bear these burdens, so that even amid their suffering, they can experience the comfort and support of a caring Christian community.

We applaud the intent of Issue 1. We encourage voters to consider whether the concerns of victims are being adequately addressed through this constitutional amendment. **The Catholic Bishops of Ohio are neutral on Issue 1.**

State Issue 2

To require state agencies to not pay more for prescription drugs than the federal Department of Veterans Affairs, and require state payment of attorney fees and expenses to specific individuals for defense of the law.

Vote Yes

- Issue 2 changes Ohio law to ensure that state agencies pay the lowest known price for medicine. Ohio tax payers could save \$400 million annually;
- Drug companies keep driving up prices on medicines;
- These same drug companies are spending millions of dollars to get people to vote against this issue;
- It is difficult for politicians to pass legislation that will lower the cost of prescription drugs.

Vote No

Issue 2 is costly, deceptive and unworkable:

- It could increase costs for millions of Ohioans who do not obtain medications through state programs;
- It gives ballot sponsors a blank check by allowing them to intervene in any legal challenges, and requires taxpayers to pay their attorney fees, win or lose;
- The claim that the ballot issue would save \$400 million annually is “simply false” and based on an assumption that Ohio does not already receive substantial prescription discounts;
- Requiring Ohio to purchase drugs at the lowest price paid by the VA would be impossible to implement because, by law, the VA does not disclose this price;
- The ballot issue contains no language guiding implementation.

Catholic Conference of Ohio’s Position

A voter’s position on Issue 2 involves a prudential judgment where people of good will may differ as to the specifics of this proposal.

For many decades, the Catholic Bishops of the United States have affirmed that affordable and accessible health care is an essential safeguard of human life and a fundamental human right. Affordable prescription drugs are an important component of a just system of health care.

We encourage voters to prayerfully consider whether passage of Issue 2 will effectively help reduce the cost of state-purchased prescription drugs. We hope our reflection questions and links to the arguments will be of some assistance.

It is important to be mindful of the limitations of this issue. It does not reduce the price of drugs that are purchased through an individual’s private/employee health plan. It only addresses the costs associated with drugs purchased by the state.

There have been numerous campaign ads addressing the effectiveness of this proposal. We urge voters to carefully discern their veracity.

Regardless of the outcome, we strongly encourage all interested parties to come together in a bi-partisan way to pass legislation that reduces the cost of prescription drugs, and addresses the common need for affordable and accessible health care for everyone.

The Catholic Bishops of Ohio are neutral on Issue 2



The Catholic Conference of Ohio is the official representative of the Catholic Church in public matters affecting the Church and the general welfare of the citizens of Ohio.

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Ballot and Voting Information is available at www.sos.state.oh.us/elections/