

FREEDOM FROM RELIGION *foundation*

P.O. BOX 750 › MADISON, WI 53701 › (608) 256-8900 › WWW.FFRF.ORG

November 16, 2022

SENT VIA EMAIL ONLY:

eoclass@irs.gov

IRS EO Classification
1111 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20224

Re: Illegal Politicking by Religious Organization

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing on behalf of the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) to once again report potential illegal political campaigning by the Diocese of Tyler, Texas. FFRF is a national nonprofit organization with more than 38,000 members across the country, including 1,600 in Texas. Our purposes are to protect the constitutional principle of separation between state and church, and to educate the public on matters relating to nontheism.

Bishop J. Strickland, speaking in an official capacity on behalf of the Catholic Diocese of Tyler, Texas, has again made endorsements of the Republican party and its politicians on Twitter. FFRF previously reported the bishop engaging in electioneering on Twitter in 2020.

On November 12, 2022, Strickland posted a chart comparing the Republican and Democratic party platforms worded in such a way as to make it clear that he was endorsing the Republican party and its politicians.¹ For example, the chart says that the Democrats want to “gut religious liberty” and support a “coercive” contraception mandate, while Republicans, for example, oppose “reshap[ing] our schools—and our entire society—to fit the mold of an ideology alien to America’s history and traditions.” This biased language is not a neutral comparison of party platforms and makes very clear which side is preferred.

On October 25, 2022, two weeks before the midterm elections, Strickland retweeted President Biden advocating for the election of Democratic members of Congress, commenting, “We must stop this evil agenda...”²

¹ <https://twitter.com/Bishopoftyler/status/1591436001632608256>

² <https://twitter.com/Bishopoftyler/status/1584865344338161666>

These tweets came from an official Twitter account for the bishop, indicated by the generic handle @Bishopoftyler. Nothing about the @Bishopoftyler handle itself indicates it is a personal account. The profile photo shows the bishop in official dress and the header photo is a photo of a church altar. Nothing suggests that these tweets are broadcast in a personal capacity. The endorsement of one political party over another is clear. Screenshots are enclosed.

IRS regulations specify that 501(c)(3) organizations, which include churches and other religious organizations, are prohibited from “[participating in or intervening in] . . . any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office.” Rev. Rul. 2007-41, 2007-25 I.R.B. (June 28, 2007).

The Diocese of Tyler appears to have again inappropriately used its religious organization and 501(c)(3) status to intervene in political campaigning. It violated IRS regulations by broadcasting a clear preference for one political party and its candidates over another. Under IRS regulations, this amounts to endorsing candidates for political office.

FFRF respectfully requests that the IRS commence an immediate investigation of the Diocese of Tyler. The IRS should take appropriate action to remedy any violations of 501(c)(3) regulations that occurred or which continue to occur.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Madeline Ziegler".

Madeline Ziegler
Staff Attorney

Enclosure



Bishop J. Strickland
@Bishopoftyler

..

The tragedy for our nation, our world and our Church is that too many choose the values on the right side of this chart which are on the wrong side of Truth. Wake up and repent of these evil choices before it's too late.

REPUBLICAN	ISSUE	DEMOCRAT
<p>• “[P]roud to be the party that protects human life and offers real solutions for women” and “strongly oppose[s] infanticide,” including specific support for: the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act; a human life constitutional amendment; a ban on abortion at 20 weeks, when unborn babies can feel pain; a ban on abortion based on sex or disability; a ban on dismemberment abortion “in which unborn babies are literally torn apart limb from limb”; abortion clinic safety regulations; a ban on human cloning, and creating or experimenting upon human embryos, including three-parent embryos; a ban on any sale of body parts; and a ban on the “use of public funds to perform or promote abortion or to fund organizations, like Planned Parenthood.”</p>	<p>Sanctity of Human Life</p>	<p>• Supports “repealing the Hyde Amendment” to allow the government to fund abortion. • Supports “codifying” the right to abortion. • “Democrats believe every woman should be able to access... reproductive health care services, including safe and legal abortions.” • “[O]ppose and will fight to overturn federal and state laws that create barriers to reproductive health and rights. • Opposes current FDA safety restrictions on chemical abortion pills. • Supports repealing President Trump’s changes to the Title X program that separate abortion from federal family planning grants.</p>
<p>• “The American family... is the foundation of civil society, and the cornerstone of the family is natural marriage, the union of one man and one woman.” • Condemns the Supreme Court’s ruling in <i>Obergefell v. Hodges</i> and “urge[s] its reversal.”</p>	<p>Redefining Marriage</p>	<p>• Silent on marriage and family being the foundation of society.</p>
<p>• We “embrace the principle that all Americans should be treated with dignity and respect.” • “We support measures” barring “government discrimination because of [one’s] views” on marriage and family.” • Supports “the right of parents to determine the proper medical treatment and therapy for their minor children.” • Opposes Title IX being used “to impose a social and cultural revolution upon the American people by wrongly redefining sex discrimination to include sexual orientation or other categories.” • Opposes “reshap[ing] our schools — and our entire society — to fit the mold of an ideology alien to America’s history and traditions.” • Opposes President Obama’s Title IX transgender bathroom edict. It is “illegal, dangerous, and ignores privacy issues.”</p>	<p>LGBT Agenda, Transgender Bathrooms, and Women’s Sports in Schools</p>	<p>• “We will fight to enact the Equality Act” – a bill that would alter our entire federal civil rights framework, gut religious liberty, and advance abortion. • Supports insurance coverage of “gender transition,” including “surgery and hormone therapy.” • “We will ensure that all transgender and non-binary people can procure official government identification documents that accurately reflect their gender identity.” • Supports banning practices aimed at assisting patients with unwanted same-sex attraction or gender dysphoria. • We will work to “guarantee transgender students’ access to facilities based on their gender identity.” • “We will protect the rights of transgender students.” • “We will fight to enact the Equality Act” – a bill that would allow biological men to play in women’s sports if they identify as transgender women.</p>
<p>• Opposes the federal government funding abortion overseas and supports restoring the Mexico City Policy, to prevent federal money from going to NGOs which “provide or promote abortion,” or are complicit in China’s one-child policy. • Condemns the Obama administration for “impos[ing] on foreign recipients, especially the peoples of Africa, its own radical social agenda while excluding faith-based groups.”</p>	<p>Abortion and the LGBT Agenda Internationally</p>	<p>• “We believe... access to reproductive care and abortion services, are vital to the empowerment of women and girls.” • Supports for repealing President Trump’s expanded Mexico City Policy and the Helms Amendment which bar American funding for abortion abroad. • “We will restore the United States’ position of leadership on LGBT+ issues” and appoint “senior leaders directly responsible for</p>



PARTY PLATFORM COMPARISON 2020-2024



REPUBLICAN	ISSUE	DEMOCRAT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “[P]roud to be the party that protects human life and offers real solutions for women” and “strongly oppose[s] infanticide,” including specific support for: the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act; a human life constitutional amendment; a ban on abortion at 20 weeks, when unborn babies can feel pain; a ban on abortion based on sex or disability; a ban on dismemberment abortion “in which unborn babies are literally torn apart limb from limb”; abortion clinic safety regulations; a ban on human cloning, and creating or experimenting upon human embryos, including three-parent embryos; a ban on any sale of body parts; and a ban on the “use of public funds to perform or promote abortion or to fund organizations, like Planned Parenthood.” 	<p>Sanctity of Human Life</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports “repealing the Hyde Amendment” to allow the government to fund abortion. • Supports “codifying” the right to abortion. • “Democrats believe every woman should be able to access... reproductive health care services, including safe and legal abortions.” • “[O]ppose and will fight to overturn federal and state laws that create barriers to reproductive health and rights. • Opposes current FDA safety restrictions on chemical abortion pills. • Supports repealing President Trump’s changes to the Title X program that separate abortion from federal family planning grants.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The American family... is the foundation of civil society, and the cornerstone of the family is natural marriage, the union of one man and one woman.” • Condemns the Supreme Court’s ruling in <i>Obergefell v. Hodges</i> and “urge[s] its reversal.” 	<p>Redefining Marriage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Silent on marriage and family being the foundation of society.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We “embrace the principle that all Americans should be treated with dignity and respect.” • “We support measures” barring “government discrimination because of [one’s views] on marriage and family.” • Supports “the right of parents to determine the proper medical treatment and therapy for their minor children.” • Opposes Title IX being used “to impose a social and cultural revolution upon the American people by wrongly redefining sex discrimination to include sexual orientation or other categories.” • Opposes “reshap[ing] our schools — and our entire society — to fit the mold of an ideology alien to America’s history and traditions.” • Opposes President Obama’s Title IX transgender bathroom edict. It is “illegal, dangerous, and ignores privacy issues.” 	<p>LGBT Agenda, Transgender Bathrooms, and Women’s Sports in Schools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “We will fight to enact the Equality Act” – a bill that would alter our entire federal civil rights framework, gut religious liberty, and advance abortion. • Supports insurance coverage of “gender transition,” including “surgery and hormone therapy.” • “We will ensure that all transgender and non-binary people can procure official government identification documents that accurately reflect their gender identity.” • Supports banning practices aimed at assisting patients with unwanted same-sex attraction or gender dysphoria. • We will work to “guarantee transgender students’ access to facilities based on their gender identity.” • “We will protect the rights of transgender students.” • “We will fight to enact the Equality Act” – a bill that would allow biological men to play in women’s sports if they identify as transgender women.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opposes the federal government funding abortion overseas and supports restoring the Mexico City Policy, to prevent federal money from going to NGOs which “provide or promote abortion,” or are complicit in China’s one-child policy. • Condemns the Obama administration for “impos[ing] on foreign recipients, especially the peoples of Africa, its own radical social agenda while excluding faith-based groups.” 	<p>Abortion and the LGBT Agenda Internationally</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “We believe...access to reproductive care and abortion services, are vital to the empowerment of women and girls.” • Supports for repealing President Trump’s expanded Mexico City Policy and the Helms Amendment which bar American funding for abortion abroad. • “We will restore the United States’ position of leadership on LGBTQ+ issues” and appoint “senior leaders directly responsible for driving...LGBTQ+ issues within the federal government.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “America’s healthcare professionals should not be forced to choose between following their faith and practicing their profession. We respect the rights of conscience of healthcare professionals, doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and organizations, especially the faith-based groups which provide a major portion of care for the nation and the needy.” 	<p>Conscience Rights in Healthcare</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports the coercive HHS contraception mandate against faith-based groups like Little Sisters of the Poor. • Condemns the Trump administration’s regulation clarifying the definition of sex discrimination in the Affordable Care Act. This regulation allows doctors, hospitals, and insurance companies to practice medicine and operate in accordance with their conscience.



Bishop J. Strickland
@Bishopoftyler



We must stop this evil agenda...



Joe Biden  @JoeBiden · Oct 24

 United States government official

If we elect two more Democratic senators and keep control of the House, here is my promise to the American people:

The first bill I will send to Congress will be to codify Roe v. Wade. When passed, I will sign it in January—50 years after Roe was decided the law of the land.

6:11 AM · Oct 25, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone