

Catholic Conference of Illinois Interview

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Bold marks a question asked by the interviewer, *italics marks follow-up question.*

Question: What, or who, motivated you to become involved in public service?

I guess the short answer is I got tired of yelling at the TV and getting nowhere with it, and I am the kind of person that, I don't like to complain hollowly, and the more I felt like I was being helpless in the situation, I thought, the more I need to volunteer, and I have stepped up my volunteer action over the last couple years, until finally, it culminated in "I have to run for office," and the governor position in the Libertarian party just fell in my lap.

As I was looking for the appropriate office to run for, this opportunity came to me, and so it is a big leap to go to the top executive office in the state on my first run for any office, but again, I want to do something, and this fell in my lap and what better way to get the message out to millions of people than to run for the top office.

Question: Who are some of the people you look up to, your heroes, whether in politics or outside of political life, and why?

Oh, boy! I mean, my grandfather [George Johnston] is probably my biggest hero. He's gone now, but he was a paragon of virtue and lived to serve other people. I got all of my values from my family, and he was probably the one guy, the anchor of the family, and the one I got my values from. There are a number of other people in life that I've always looked up to. In the political world, it would be Michael Badnarik, someone who ran for President as a Libertarian in 2004, a friend of mine, and his bravery inspired me to go on. If I were to look at other people for inspiration, I would look to the founding fathers as well.

Question #1: Ultrasound Act

Do you support or oppose the Ultrasound Opportunity Act, which is House Bill 5743 and mandates abortion facilities to offer women seeking abortion an opportunity to view an ultrasound of their unborn baby?

I'm going to preface by saying each of the bills you reference, I did not go look them up specifically, so I'm operating on your description of the bill, and based on that, I'm going to say I oppose that option.

In this case, my thinking is, as you'll find in almost all my answers, is I feel that government power is something to be distrusted, and I think that the ultrasound option is a good idea, but I don't think

that the government mandate is necessarily the way to go, and as I mentioned in my questionnaire, the ultimate question here is whether you do or don't approve of abortion. If we do not address that and we are operating under the Roe vs. Wade paradigm, then I feel that we're expanding government power, and I'm against that. So again, I think that anybody who opposes abortion should be concentrating on overturning Roe v. Wade, and not this interim step.

Question #2: Tuition Vouchers

Do you support or oppose legislation offering tuition vouchers to parents of students in underperforming and overcrowded schools so they may choose a quality state-recognized non-public school?

I support that. I support anything that gives us more choice where schools are involved. I'm actually for a more local approach rather than a state mandate for schools, and you'll see this in all my policies where education's concerned. If we have open enrollment, which would be facilitated through the use of vouchers, then I think that we would have much better education, at least for the majority of school districts, and I do think that private schools should be included in those programs.

Question #3: Death Penalty

Do you support or oppose the abolition of the death penalty?

This is one of the questions that's a yes and a no both, but I want to say oppose, and I have a very specific proposal for the resumption of the death penalty, although there really never was an official moratorium. But I'm going to say, first of all, life is sacred, and therefore, we should not take it for light purposes. However, I don't think that a person is immune from giving up his right to life for a particularly heinous crime. If that were to happen, if we were to try a capital case, I have very specific things that I want to include that would have to go into this, making sure we do not kill somebody based upon an overzealous prosecutor or a mistake on any part of the system.

First of all, I would not want any case where there was suppressed evidence in a capital case. I feel that suppressing evidence is a courtroom trick that allows somebody to get a guilty or non-guilty verdict that is not in the best interests of justice, so I would say that first of all, there should be no suppressed evidence in a capital case. Second of all, and according to the Illinois State Constitution, this is already part of it, it would have to be appealed immediately to the Illinois Supreme Court. That's already part of Illinois law. The final thing that I would add is that in order to get to the actual point of execution, we would have to have an order from the governor's office. Not waiting around to see if there's going to be clemency, but a single man with the awesome responsibility of somebody's life in his hand would have to say, yes, we're going to do this. If we do not have that, which I would hope means that there's clear evidence of the heinousness of the crime that is being tried, then the case would have to be either turned over to a life sentence or sent back to the courts for retrial as a non-capital case. I do believe that somebody who has no regard for my life doesn't necessarily have the right to life himself. Your right to live ends when you threaten me with lethal force as far as I'm concerned. So again, a capital case would have to pass muster on those issues to

make sure that it's not trivialized, that the seriousness of what we're doing is properly considered by all parties.

Question #4: Civil Unions

Do you support or oppose legislation establishing civil unions for same sex couples in Illinois?

This is another one of those yes and no things. I support legislation giving homosexual and gay couples equal rights under the law. But, having said that, I am a fan of limited government, and I do not believe that the government should be involved in the decision between a man and a woman to get married.

I know the reasoning for the origin of marriage licenses, and it has its roots in racism, and it continues today; I'm not sure why. I think mostly for the revenue, so I would propose that, rather than extending the government intrusion into the sacred contract between a man and a woman to a contract between two men or two women, I say we need to go the other way, that the contract of marriage between a man and a woman is between them or between them and their church, and the government has no business in it. So I would actually prefer to go the other way and repeal parts of Illinois law having to do with who can and cannot get married.

Just to be clear, as far as support or oppose, which did you mark on the questionnaire?

I believe I said that I support, because again, I'm for equal protection under the law for all people regardless of race, creed, or sexual orientation.

Any thought to the impact of this legislation on religious liberties of religious organizations, such as in the area of adoption and foster care services provided through Catholic Charities?

I think that there are different laws in place concerning adoptions, and as someone who thinks the government shouldn't tell you what to do or me what to do as individuals, likewise, I shouldn't be able to tell private organizations, so if you're not taking public money, and if the Catholic Church is operating adoptions, they should be able to do so under their own rules. That is an extension of the same principles that I run on in just about all issues, so I would be opposed to forcing the church or an adoption agency sponsored by the church from having to do anything that the government tells them to do, basically.

Question #5: Immigration

Would you support or oppose legislation in Illinois similar to Arizona's law?

I would support similar legislation. I am running as a states' rights candidate, actually states' powers is probably the more correct term, but everybody thinks of states' rights, a 10th amendment candidate, and I think that what Arizona did was to look out for their own interests to protect their own citizens. Now I don't necessarily agree with all the details, because I believe your questionnaire mentioned stopping people and asking for identification, and I'm not fond of that aspect of it. It conjures up the idea of Nazi Germany in my mind. But I do think that, I am opposed

to what I call the welfare state, and if I am opposed to the welfare state internally to our country, I certainly don't favor extending it then to non-citizens. That's the wrong way to go. I go back to the rights or the powers of the states should include passing whatever laws they see necessary, as long as they are fair and do not infringe upon people's rights, to protect their own citizens.

Question: Are there other issues that you would like to raise in addressing the Catholics throughout the state?

I think that my answers show there is a consistency in my thinking, a consistency of purpose, and that is to limit the size of government that's based upon a respect for the Constitution of the United States, and I want to further that model. That model maximizes freedom for the Catholic Church, for all churches, and for people who don't attend church. Those freedoms are very important to me. They were put in place by the founding fathers, and I think that we should return to that model for our government.