

DATE: January 20, 2022

FROM: Brian Burch, President, CatholicVote

TO: Supporters of CatholicVote

RE: Catholic Accountability Project

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*“[E]very believer shares responsibility for the Gospel.  
Every Catholic is a missionary of the Good News  
of human dignity redeemed through the cross<sup>1</sup>.”*

Every Catholic is called to faithfully witness to the truth of Jesus Christ and His Church. As Americans and followers of Christ, this Gospel imperative is not optional. All Catholics, and especially those in positions of leadership, are bound to defend and promote the truths of the human person, authoritatively taught by our Church, and revealed to us in the nature and beauty of God’s creation.

Yet, today far too many prominent Catholic leaders and institutions have failed to live up to this Gospel call. This is especially true when it comes to Catholic elected officials, at all levels of government, many of whom openly reject fundamental Catholic doctrine on foundational Catholic moral teachings like abortion, marriage, and religious freedom. Not only do these Catholics reject Church teaching, but they also openly flaunt their opposition.

Take, for example, President Joe Biden, who openly proclaims that he supports abortion up until the moment of birth and personally presided over a same-sex “marriage” ceremony. He frequently touts his Catholic faith, while his administration has extolled him as a “devout” Catholic.

President Biden is far from the first public figure to put abortion advocacy above core Church teaching. From Mario Cuomo to Tim Kaine, a long line of Catholic politicians have used the “personally pro-life but publicly pro-choice” trope to excuse their contempt for Catholic principles.

The issue is not limited to politicians. Media companies and personalities, universities and colleges, hospitals, charities and other institutions claim the Catholic mantle, while proudly defying our faith’s most fundamental moral teachings.

This phenomenon is a source of grave scandal in our Church and in our society because it openly invites Catholics to reject Church doctrine while allowing them to self-identify as “good” Catholics. It also confuses non-Catholics about where the Church stands and demoralizes

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/abortion/living-the-gospel-of-life>

Catholics who aspire to remain faithful to the Church. Faithless Catholics leaders and institutions make a mockery of church teaching. They *degrade* our Church.

Faithful Catholics have a duty to hold these public leaders and institutions accountable. Indeed, millions of American Catholics have been clamoring for decades for someone to make these prominent Catholics or self-identified Catholics answer for the scandal they continue to cause.

We are proud to announce the *Catholic Accountability Project*, an initiative to track and expose Catholic politicians, media figures, universities, and other persons or institutions which use our faith to justify grievous moral wrongs. This project has two components: research and action.

## RESEARCH

Using our research and digital capabilities, we have begun building a database, accessible to CatholicVote members and the general public, to expose the records of Catholics in public life, starting with members of Congress. We have published a list of self-identified Catholics in Congress and tracked their recent votes on the pre-eminent issue of the sanctity of life. The figures are troubling:

- There are 131 self-identified Catholics in the U.S. House of Representatives, comprising nearly one third of the membership, yet only 44% of them consistently vote pro-life. And unfortunately, just one Catholic Democrat is pro-life.
- There are 25 self-identified Catholics in the U.S. Senate, but only 32% of them consistently vote pro-life. 16% of them occasionally vote pro-life, and 52% of them consistently vote pro-abortion. There are two Catholic Republicans who are pro-abortion.

We will be expanding our congressional tracking tool in the coming months to publish the voting records of these Catholics on other critical issues such as marriage, religious freedom, and the right of parents as the primary educators of their children.

We will also be expanding the scope of the project to include other public figures and organizations. For example, a recent report by Students for Life of America found that nearly two dozen Catholic universities had direct ties to Planned Parenthood. Or take the media company, the National Catholic Reporter, which was ordered by their bishop years ago to cease using the Catholic label, but has defied the order. We aim to expose these institutions and many others so that Catholics and the public understand that they do not represent our faith.

## ACTION

Marshaling the full resources of CatholicVote, we will ensure that public figures who openly defy Catholic teaching face consequences for the scandal they cause. It starts this year, with the 2022 midterm elections. **As a lay organization, we cannot deny communion to pro-abortion Catholics, but we can deny them their seats in Congress.**

Our efforts will include an aggressive media campaign, educational tools, and lay activism across the country. We also will work with Church leaders, priests, and bishops to provide critical information on activities, institutions, and Catholic leaders in their dioceses that threaten the integrity of the Church.

We will also soon announce the details of an unprecedented media campaign to hold Catholics in Congress and the Senate accountable in the upcoming midterm election. We will fight to ensure that voters know exactly where these self-identified Catholics stand.

## **CONCLUSION**

Faithful Catholics in America have been waiting for something like this for a long time, and we are ready to do our part. This is one of the most ambitious efforts we have ever undertaken. Your continued insights, prayers, and intel on the ground in your parishes and dioceses will be critical.

Please visit the Catholic Accountability Project at [catholicvote.org/cap](https://catholicvote.org/cap).