



Massachusetts Catholic Conference
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Archdiocese of Boston, Diocese of Fall River,
Diocese of Springfield, Diocese of Worcester

Revised Policy Regarding Signature Drive Campaigns on Church Property

Background

Within the coming days, and continuing through November 20, 2019, efforts will begin by several advocacy groups to gather thousands of signatures from voters across the state. Those efforts will be taking place as the next step in the qualification process to place a question on the ballot for November, 2020 or November, 2022 state wide elections. The ballot questions, if approved by the voters, would enact new laws and /or amend the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The purpose of this directive is to set forth the policy of the Bishops in the event requests are made by advocates to collect signatures on church property.

Policy

1. The decision to allow signature gathering will be at the sole discretion of the Pastor/Administrator of the Church provided that any petition approved by the Pastor/Administrator must be in accordance with the teachings of the Church.
2. Signature gathering must take place at a designated location(s) on the property away from the flow of parishioners approaching or departing Holy Mass. The location shall be determined by the Pastor/Administrator.
3. The Pastor/Administrator shall decide the appropriate method of communicating to the parishioners the fact that petitions are available for signing at the designated location(s). Announcements at the beginning or end of Mass, bulletin inserts, email notifications, etc. are suggested means of communication.
4. All written materials which are proposed to be distributed on Church property or printed in the bulletins must be approved in advance by the Massachusetts Catholic Conference.

Please direct your questions and proposed written material to: James F. Driscoll, Executive Director, Massachusetts Catholic Conference at 617-746-5620 or jdriscoll@macatholic.org.

September 10, 2019