



In a healthy democracy, respect is shown for the religious freedom and beliefs of every person. However, in our country today, religion is often used to divide and—more disturbingly—as a means to take away the rights of other people. In our pluralistic democracy, it is critical that those running for public office model how best to integrate their faith with their responsibility to all people, if elected.

The **Faith & Democracy Caucus Project** of the Interfaith Alliance of Iowa Action Fund explores the important issues around religious freedom and how the faith and beliefs of candidates would inform their policy decisions. The answers below were provided and approved by the candidate listed and the content was not edited in any manner. We encourage voters to consider the responses of all the candidates and follow up with each candidate to foster positive conversation on these critical issues.

.....**FORMER CONGRESSMAN JOHN DELANEY...**



1. Should candidates share their personal religious beliefs when running for public office?

Religion is a personal topic and candidates shouldn't feel an obligation to talk about specific religious beliefs, but it is important for candidates to talk about their values. Voters deserve to know what candidates think about the big issues, and having a discussion about values and moral beliefs is an important part of choosing a leader.

2. How will your faith or values influence your views on public policy?

My faith informs my values, especially my commitment to social justice, but it does not dictate specific policy positions. The most important influence of my faith is my belief in our responsibility to care for the poorest and most vulnerable citizens. That's why I'm running on universal health care, fighting poverty, and ending hunger.

3. What are the proper boundaries between religion and government?

I am committed to the fundamental American value of the separation of church and state. I think it is important that people from all faith backgrounds or from no faith background should be able to engage in public service to work for the common good.



4. How will you protect the rights of people, especially the rights of those in the minority?

Protecting and advancing civil rights is one of government's most important functions. My administration will be committed to enforcing existing anti-discrimination laws including workplace protections for members of minority religious groups and accountability when discrimination against minorities is exposed. Additionally, as president I will push Congress to pass the Equality Act, which will prohibit discrimination against the LGBTQ community, and the Voting Rights Advancement Act, which will restore and strengthen protections for voting rights that the Supreme Court gutted.

5. How will you balance the principles of your faith or beliefs with your obligation to defend the Constitution, particularly if the two come into conflict?

I will faithfully execute the duties of the President of the United States of America. While my actions will be guided by my values, I believe in the separation between church and state and will act accordingly.

6. How would you seek to balance the conflicting religious and civil rights of citizens?

I do not think there is a conflict between protecting civil rights, especially for vulnerable members of our society, and protecting the free exercise of religion. In the U.S. people have the freedom to worship as they see fit, and the government should never adopt policies that favor one religious group over another. Civil rights legislation, including the Equality Act which I am committed to enacting, appropriately prohibits discrimination in public accommodations and government services without infringing on religious freedom.

7. How would you reduce the influence of politics from our federal courts and make them less partisan?

The politicization of the judiciary is bad for our democracy, and I oppose ideas like court packing that would make courts more political. We need to return to the tradition of an independent, objective, and non-partisan judiciary by restoring the norms of the judicial nomination and confirmation process. Senator Mitch McConnell's unwillingness to hold hearings for the Supreme Court nominee Merrick Garland was unconscionable and is a prime example of behavior we need to avoid in the future.

8. Should public funds be used for private educational choices at the K-12 level? If so, name the specific ways.

I would not support a voucher program that replaces funding for the public education system. I would support a compromise that increases funding for public education while also providing for a voucher program, like the system in Washington, DC.

9. How would you protect a woman's right to reproductive health care, including abortion and contraceptive choices?

I am pro-choice and committed to fighting for women's rights, including the right to access

reproductive care.

10. What priority actions would you take in addressing the immigration crisis at the southern border?

We have to look at immigration with a sense of shared humanity. I will stop the immoral practice of family separation, limit family detention, roll back the Trump Administration's policies curtailing the ability to seek asylum, increase immigration judges, and increase foreign aid to the Central American countries where many of the immigrants attempting to enter the US are from. I would also pursue comprehensive immigration reform based on the 2013 bipartisan Senate bill that includes a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants currently in the US.

11. How would you promote civility and civil dialogue in the public debate of issues that are dividing our nation?

First and foremost I would lead by example. Some of the most important things we can do to promote civil discourse are for politicians to tell the truth and stop intentionally trying to divide the American people. Keeping our political debate focused on the facts, and avoiding insults, can help people remember our shared values and our common purpose.

The Interfaith Alliance of Iowa & Action Fund is grateful for the opportunity to provide the candidate responses to our Faith & Democracy questionnaire. This effort is solely meant as a tool to educate voters on the candidates' positions on these important issues. In no way is the publication of any candidate response to be seen as an endorsement of their candidacy for public office.