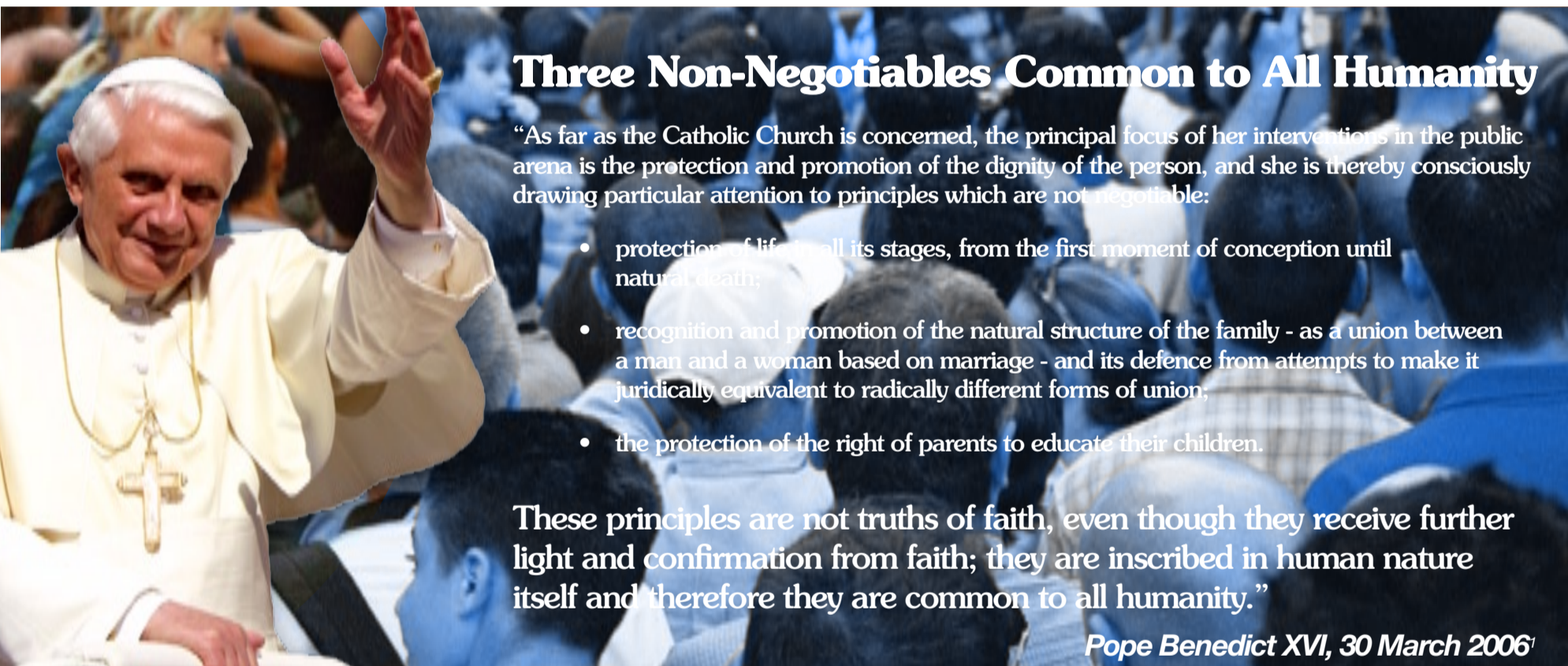


ELECTION SPECIAL

The Marriage and Family Office and the Life Office invite you to carefully consider the following issues prior to exercising your vote on 24 November 2007.



FEDERAL ELECTION 2007: VOTING RECORDS AND POLICIES RELATING TO SOME LIFE, MARRIAGE AND FAMILY ISSUES



Three Non-Negotiables Common to All Humanity

“As far as the Catholic Church is concerned, the principal focus of her interventions in the public arena is the protection and promotion of the dignity of the person, and she is thereby consciously drawing particular attention to principles which are not negotiable:

- protection of life at all its stages, from the first moment of conception until natural death;
- recognition and promotion of the natural structure of the family - as a union between a man and a woman based on marriage - and its defence from attempts to make it juridically equivalent to radically different forms of union;
- the protection of the right of parents to educate their children.

These principles are not truths of faith, even though they receive further light and confirmation from faith; they are inscribed in human nature itself and therefore they are common to all humanity.”

Pope Benedict XVI, 30 March 2006¹

Please refer to the overleaf spread for a table outlining the major parties voting records and policies.

References to the Table overleaf

1. Address to the members of the European People's Party, March 30, 2006.
2. For space reasons, only political parties currently represented in Federal Parliament have been included.
3. All quotes, unless otherwise referenced, have been sourced from party platforms and publicly available policy statements.
4. *A Vote For Us All*, Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC), Canberra, August 6, 2007.
5. The *Therapeutic Goods Amendment (Repeal of Ministerial Responsibility for Approval of RU486) Bill 2005* loosened restrictions on the importation and sale of abortion drug RU486 by removing the Federal Health Minister's responsibility for approving the drug. The bill passed the Senate on February 9, 2006 and the House of Representatives on February 16, 2006.
6. The *Euthanasia Laws Act 1997* (Commonwealth) originated as a private member's bill sponsored by Kevin Andrews MP (Liberal, VIC). This Act prohibited the ACT and Northern Territory from legalising euthanasia and rescinded the Northern Territory's pro-euthanasia law.
7. *A statement from the Australian Catholic Bishops on human embryo cloning and destructive embryo experimentation*, ACBC, Canberra, October 11, 2006.
8. The *Prohibition of Human Cloning for Reproduction and the Regulation of Human Embryo Research Amendment Bill 2006*, sponsored by Senator Kay Patterson (Liberal, VIC), was passed into law in November 2006. It rescinded the previous ban on human cloning and authorised the creation and destruction of cloned human embryos for research purposes.
9. The *Marriage Amendment Act 2004* provides that “marriage means the union of a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life” and that same sex unions solemnised in foreign countries will not be recognised as marriages in Australia.
10. Hansard, June 15, 2006.
11. Full text of bill available at <http://parlinfoweb.aph.gov.au/piweb/Repository/Legis/Bills/Linked/01030707.pdf>.
12. *Make It Count*, National Press Club, August 9, 2007 (transcript provided by Media Monitors).
13. Ibid.
14. *Meet the Press*, September 30, 2007.
15. This motion on June 15, 2006, sponsored by Senator Kerry Nettle (Greens, NSW), Senator Natasha Stott Despoja (Democrats, SA) and Senator Joe Ludwig (Labor, QLD) attempted to overturn the Federal Government's disallowance of the ACT's civil unions law, which gave same-sex unions the same status as marriage.

POLITICAL PARTY²

	AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRATS	FAMILY FIRST	GREENS	LABOR	LIBERALS	NATIONALS
LIFE ABORTION	The party "support[s] a woman's fundamental right to safe, affordable and legal abortion." ³ The party will "fast track and subsidise importation of RU486, so that women can access an alternative to surgical abortion."	"Family First is opposed to the medical procedure of abortion. [We] call for a greater commitment to support women in their time of pregnancy and as mothers so that their life choices and financial and educational prospects are not jeopardised by the decision to keep their unborn child."	The Greens will "ensure all women have access to legal, free and safe pregnancy termination services, including unbiased counselling."	Labor "support[s] the rights of women to determine their own reproductive lives, particularly the right to choose appropriate fertility control and abortion." Conscience vote.	No party policy. Conscience vote.	No party policy. Conscience vote.

"All human life is to be respected, particularly the most vulnerable, including the unborn...In Australia we welcome the growing consensus that the level of abortion is deeply disturbing." – Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC), August 2007⁴

RU486 BILL⁵ (The drug RU486 is used to induce early abortion)	The Democrats voted unanimously in favour of RU486.	Family First's only sitting MP voted against RU486.	The Greens voted unanimously in favour of RU486.	74 Labor MPs voted in favour of RU486; 11 voted against it.	47 Liberal MPs voted in favour of RU486; 52 voted against it.	4 National Party MPs voted in favour of RU486; 11 voted against it.
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*Pie Graph Source: Hansard
LEGEND FOR AGAINST

"Respect for human life also requires constant vigilance to ensure that euthanasia and assisted suicide are never legalised in Australia. These acts, which are presented as acts of mercy, are in fact an abandonment of those who need our care and protection most." – ACBC, August 2007

EUTHANASIA/ ASSISTED SUICIDE	The Democrats support "the right to refuse medical treatment, and to choose to die."	"Family First opposes deliberately ending a person's life or helping them to end their own life."	Greens leader, Senator Bob Brown (TAS), has introduced the Rights of the Terminally Ill Bill 2007 to legalise euthanasia.	No party policy. Conscience vote.	No party policy. Conscience vote.	No party policy. Conscience vote.
EUTHANASIA LAWS BILL 1997⁶	6 Democrats Senators voted in favour of legal euthanasia; 1 voted against it.	Family First had no sitting MP in Federal Parliament in 1995 when this vote took place.	The Greens voted unanimously in favour of legal euthanasia.	42 Labor MPs voted in favour of legal euthanasia, 31 voted against it, and 6 did not vote.	16 Liberal MPs voted in favour of legal euthanasia, 73 voted against it, and 16 did not vote.	1 National Party MP voted in favour of legal euthanasia, 17 voted against it, and 5 did not vote.

*Pie Graph Source: Hansard
LEGEND FOR AGAINST DID NOT VOTE

"As a society we cannot seek to alleviate the suffering of some people by creating and then killing human life." – ACBC, October 2006⁷

THE HUMAN EMBRYO Human Cloning and Embryo Research Bill 2006 ⁸	The Democrats voted unanimously in favour of human cloning.	"In our [Family First's] view creating human life for the purpose of destroying it is simply wrong and never justifiable."	Three Greens senators voted in favour of human cloning. One voted against it.	60 Labor MPs voted in favour of human cloning, and 26 voted against it.	47 Liberal MPs voted in favour of human cloning, and 51 voted against it.	1 National Party MP voted in favour of human cloning, and 14 voted against it.
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*Pie Graph Source: Hansard
LEGEND FOR AGAINST

MARRIAGE MARRIAGE AMENDMENT BILL 2004⁹ (to define marriage as a union of a man and a woman for life)	4 Democrats senators voted against the traditional definition of marriage; 1 was absent from the vote. In June 2006, the Democrats introduced a Same Sex Marriages Bill into the Senate. Senator Bartlett stated that this bill "seeks to ...ensur[e] that same sex unions are given equal status to heterosexual marriage." ¹⁰	Family First had no sitting member in Federal Parliament when this vote took place. Family First will "affirm and defend the institution of marriage as being a union of a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life."	The Greens voted unanimously against the traditional definition of marriage. In February 2007, the Greens introduced the Marriage (Relationships Equality) Amendment Bill into the Senate. This bill defines marriage as "the union of two persons, regardless of their sexuality or gender identity, voluntarily entered into for life." ¹¹	In the House of Representatives, the Labor party joined the Coalition in voting in favour of the traditional definition of marriage. No division was called. A Labor-sponsored amendment to give the same status to same-sex relationships as de facto heterosexual relationships was defeated on party lines. In the Senate, 15 Labor senators voted in favour of the bill; 14 were absent. Whilst not supporting same sex marriage and civil unions, the Opposition Leader stated that "marriage is between a man and a woman...We are, however, prepared to embrace the possibility of relationships registers as they exist at the state level." ¹²	In the Senate, 19 Liberal senators voted in favour of the bill; 12 were absent. The Prime Minister stated that "marriage [is] a voluntary union for life of a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others... that is our view of marriage" ¹³	In the Senate, 2 National Party senators voted in favour of the bill; 1 senator was absent. The Deputy Prime Minister stated that "we have a clearly defined position on the issue of same-sex marriage and we stick to the traditional description of marriage as being between a man and a woman." ¹⁴
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*Pie Graph Source: Hansard
LEGEND FOR AGAINST ABSENT

"There must be legal recognition of the unique nature of marriage between a man and a woman, and proper protection for the rights of children." – ACBC, August 2007

SAME SEX MARRIAGE Senate motion ¹⁵ to support ACT legislation equating same sex unions with marriage	4 Democrats senators voted to support the ACT law; 1 did not vote.	Family First's only sitting MP voted against the ACT law.	All Greens senators voted to support the ACT law.	22 Labor senators voted to support the ACT law; 4 voted against it; 4 did not vote.	1 Liberal senator voted to support the ACT law; 26 voted against it; 6 did not vote.	3 National Party senators voted against the ACT law; 1 did not vote.
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*Pie Graph Source: Hansard
LEGEND FOR AGAINST DID NOT VOTE

FAMILY PORNOGRAPHY	The Democrats support the option of home internet filtering and are opposed to "compulsory content filtering".	"Family First will work...to establish a Mandatory Filtering Scheme at the Internet Service Provider [ISP] Server Level in this country."	The Greens will "introduce a nationally consistent approach to the regulated sale of X-rated material." (Points of sale are currently limited to the Northern Territory and the ACT.)	The Labor party supports mandatory ISP level filtering.	The Coalition government has made home internet filtering available and plans to make the ISP level filtering option available following a trial and feasibility study.	The Coalition government has made home internet filtering available and plans to make the ISP level filtering option available following a trial and feasibility study.
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"At a time when family life is subject to unprecedented pressure, families must be supported in every possible way." – ACBC, August 2007

DRUGS	"The Australian Democrats do not endorse illegal drug use, but recognise that drug use is an undeniable part of many people's lives." Action Plan to include "continu[ing] investment in needle and syringe exchange programmes and support medically supervised injection centres where needed."	"Family First rejects harm minimisation as the primary strategy for combating substance abuse. The party favours prevention, rehabilitation and avoidance as more acceptable primary strategies."	The Greens will "increase the availability of harm reduction programs, including needle and syringe exchanges and medically supervised injecting rooms, and implement a rigorous scientific trial of prescribed heroin to registered users, in line with the proposed 1996 ACT Government heroin trial."	Labor will focus on prevention, early intervention and reducing harm through a comprehensive strategy of education, health and support services and law enforcement.	The Coalition's National Illicit Drugs Strategy focuses on reducing supply through law enforcement, reducing demand through education and healthcare, and strengthening and supporting families.	The Coalition's National Illicit Drugs Strategy focuses on reducing supply through law enforcement, reducing demand through education and healthcare, and strengthening and supporting families.
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"The diversity of the Australian system of co-extensive schooling – public, Catholic and private – is a great strength and should be supported in every way... assist[ing] parents in choosing the education that they want for their children, reflecting their own circumstances, values and beliefs." – ACBC, August 2007

RELIGIOUS EXPRESSION/ VALUES IN SCHOOLS	The Democrats will "ensure the existence of compulsory health and lifestyle programs, including STI [Sexually Transmitted Infections] awareness components in all government and non-government schools and the provision of sexual health services such as condoms in schools."	"Family First acknowledges the diversity of beliefs, traditions and values within Australian homes and will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defend parents' rights to choose schooling that supports their family's values; Defend the right of independent schools to employ staff who uphold the values of their school community." 	The Greens will "extend to private schools the anti-discrimination measures that apply in public schools." (Current law enables religious schools to preferentially employ staff who are willing to support the school's religious ethos.) The Greens want "the education system to provide age-appropriate information about the diversity of sexuality."	"Labor continues to respect the right of parents to choose a non-government school for their children". Please contact your local MP or candidate for further information about his or her position.	Coalition policy is to provide a choice of government or non-government schools. Please contact your local MP or candidate for further information about his or her position.	Coalition policy is to provide a choice of government or non-government schools. Please contact your local MP or candidate for further information about his or her position.
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