

The Faith Leader Advocacy Guide

How to engage your congregation in civic issues without crossing any lines

The Policy Lab · mspolicylab.com · [@thepolicylab_](https://twitter.com/thepolicylab_)

Mississippi civic life runs through the church. Faith leaders have unparalleled trust in their communities and a moral authority that secular organizations don't have. This guide helps you use that gift responsibly and effectively.

WHAT FAITH LEADERS CAN DO

■ Educate your congregation about policy issues affecting your community

Announcing a community meeting, explaining what a bill does — this is civic education, not partisan politics

■ Encourage voter registration and civic participation

Non-partisan encouragement to participate is legal and powerful

■ Host community forums and listening sessions

Your facility is a civic asset — use it

■ Personally advocate on policy issues

As an individual citizen, you can take any position you want

■ Partner with advocacy organizations for issue education

Guest speakers, bulletin inserts, community events

WHAT 501(c)(3) FAITH INSTITUTIONS CANNOT DO

■ Endorse or oppose candidates from the pulpit

This is the IRS hard line for all 501(c)(3) organizations

■ Use church funds for political campaigns

Even if the candidate aligns with your values

■ Allow church resources to be used for partisan political activity

Be careful about what your facilities and staff time are used for

REFLECTION

The policy issue that most affects my congregation right now

How I can address this issue from a moral and civic framing (not partisan)

One action I can take as a civic leader in the next 30 days

The Policy Lab LLC

mspolicylab.com

[@thepolicylab_](https://twitter.com/thepolicylab_)