



In keeping with its mission, the Virginia Catholic Conference aims to educate and inform Catholics about a wide range of issues. The information compiled here has been gathered from policies, public statements, official and campaign websites, and other resources, as of August 8th, to help voters form their consciences before voting in November. The issues that appear here do not represent a complete list of issues that may be of importance to Catholics. The VCC neither supports nor opposes any candidate for public office.

*“Human dignity is respected and the common good is fostered only if **human rights are protected and basic responsibilities** are met. Every human being has a right to life, the fundamental right that makes all other rights possible, and a right to access those things required for human decency – food and shelter, education and employment, health care and housing, freedom of religion and family life.”*

– Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, No. 49, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2015.



TIMOTHY M. KAINE

HUNG CAO



ABORTION

Kaine called the Dobbs decision “a catastrophe”. Kaine press releases stated he supported bills to “codify women’s rights to access abortion and contraception”, “guarantee access to abortion care across the country”, “protect the right of women to cross state lines to seek abortion care”, and “protect access to mail-order medication abortion”. On abortion-related funding restrictions, Kaine voted for a stand-alone Hyde amendment, voted against a combined Hyde-Weldon amendment, and voted against applying the Hyde restrictions to a Department of Veterans Affairs policy.

Cao stated that he was “thrilled to see” the Dobbs decision. Cao said abortion is “a state-level issue” in light of Dobbs and therefore “as a U.S. senator, I would never vote for anything that would restrict abortion because I don’t want to take rights away from the states.”
In a 2022 Virginia Constitutional Conservatives survey, Cao indicated he would sponsor legislation “to end all taxpayer funded abortions, and all federal aid to organizations that fund or perform abortions.”

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

Kaine introduced the Smarter Sentencing Act saying, “Ensuring that federal judges can consider individual circumstances when determining sentences for certain nonviolent drug offenses will reduce overcrowding in our federal prisons, save taxpayers billions of dollars, and help nonviolent former drug users to re-enter their communities.”

Cao’s campaign website stated, “Our law enforcement officers are the first and last line of defense. We are a country of laws, and these brave men and women must be allowed to do their jobs in enforcing these laws and protecting our citizens.”

DEATH PENALTY

Kaine cosponsored the Federal Death Penalty Prohibition Act to end the federal death penalty.

No statements on Cao’s position on the death penalty were found.

EDUCATIONAL CHOICE

Kaine’s 2018 campaign website stated, “Tim will fight efforts to divert public school funding to private schools, and he supports raising teacher pay and providing teachers with the tools and resources they need in the classroom.”

Cao’s campaign website stated, “If parents feel that their child’s education is not up to their standard, they should be able to take their tax dollars to a school that does meet that standard. School choice gives power back to parents.”

ENVIRONMENT

Kaine cosponsored “legislation to streamline the federal response to climate hazards that threaten human health and well-being, critical infrastructure, and natural systems” (National Climate Adaptation and Resilience Strategy Act). Kaine’s Senate website stated that he “supports investing in renewable energy, including offshore wind and solar, which...would...reduce pollution and bolster our national security.”

Cao’s website stated, “We should always be a good steward of the Earth that God provided.” He is opposed to “American dependence on unclear foreign energy sources.” In a social media post Cao stated, “We must invest in producing American-made energy. This is more than just oil. It means natural gas & nuclear power. As the primary energy exporter of the world, America will have the leverage to continue being a superpower.”

GENDER ISSUES

Kaine cosponsored the Equality Act, which would add the new terms “sexual orientation” and “gender identity” to the definition of “sex” in federal civil rights laws, and would exempt itself from the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993.

During a 2022 debate in a congressional race, Cao stated that “biological boys shouldn’t be in girls’ bathrooms, locker rooms or sports.”

HEALTH CARE

Kaine’s Senate website noted his support for “protecting the Affordable Care Act, Medicare, and Medicaid, and improving the health care system to give all Americans access to quality, affordable health care,” as well as his support of “legislation to give Americans more options for affordable health coverage.”

During a 2022 debate, Cao said “we have the best medical care in the world, and that’s because of the competition we have.” In a 2022 Virginia Constitutional Conservatives survey, Cao indicated he would sponsor legislation “de-funding Obamacare” and legislation “to permit the interstate purchase of health care insurance.”



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IMMIGRATION/REFUGEES

Kaine's Senate website stated he "supports comprehensive immigration reform, including creating a better legal immigration system to meet America's labor and family needs, enhancing border security, and creating a path to citizenship."

During a July 2024 debate Cao said, "[W]e need to protect this country by securing the border. We need to finish that border wall system. And we need to make sure that anybody who continues to do violent crimes needs to be immediately deported. And then we need to figure out why these people got here and how they got here."

IN VITRO FERTILIZATION (IVF)

Kaine cosponsored and voted for the Right to IVF Act. A Kaine press release noted the legislation includes provisions to "establish a statutory right for individuals to access, providers to provide, and insurers to cover IVF and ART services", "allow adversely affected parties to sue", and require employer-sponsored insurance plans and insurance carriers that participate in the Federal Employees Health Benefit Program to cover IVF treatments.

In a social media post reacting to a statement by former President Donald Trump "supporting the availability of fertility treatments like IVF in every State in America," Cao said Trump "hit the nail on the head."

POVERTY

Kaine's Senate website noted that he cosponsored legislation to raise the minimum wage to \$17 per hour "because he believes no one working full time should live in poverty." Kaine also cosponsored legislation to "encourage more development of affordable homeownership options in underserved communities."

In a social media post, Cao said rising inflation "is why food and gas is so high and Americans can't afford to feed their family." During a 2022 public forum, Cao expressed support for raising the asset limits for Supplemental Security Income, which supports low-income people who are blind or have disabilities.

RACIAL EQUITY

In the U.S. Senate, Kaine "led efforts to propose a commission commemorating 400 years of African American history in the United States." He also supported a package of bills to address racial inequality and injustice and said, "All Americans will benefit if this country gets serious about truly dismantling the painful architecture of discrimination against African Americans that began on Virginia soil more than 400 years ago."

In an op-ed Cao wrote, "[I]n recent years, the importance of meritocracy has been undermined by a growing focus on political ideology and equity. This has led to a culture in which individuals are judged by the color of their skin rather than the content of their character...This ideology goes against the American Dream that I immigrated to as a young boy and fought to protect as a man."

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

A 2014 Kaine press release stated he introduced legislation "to restore the contraceptive coverage requirement guaranteed by the Affordable Care Act and protect coverage of other health services from employers who want to impose their beliefs on their employees by denying benefits." The release stated the bill was introduced in response to the U.S. Supreme Court's June 30, 2014 Burwell v. Hobby Lobby decision.

In a 2022 social media post Cao stated, "The right to express one's faith is a cornerstone of this country. I'm glad to see religious freedom being protected by the Court." The post was in reference to a Supreme Court decision protecting the right of a football coach at a public high school to pray alone but in view of students after games.

UKRAINE AND THE MIDDLE EAST

Kaine sponsored a bill to ensure that Russian war crimes in Ukraine are documented, saying, "We must send a strong message to Putin and authoritarians around the world that these crimes will not be tolerated."

During a 2022 debate in a congressional race, Cao said, "My heart goes out to the Ukrainian people. ...But right now we're borrowing \$55 billion from China to pay for the war in Ukraine. Not only that, we're depleting our national strategic reserves."

A May 2024 Kaine press release stated, "Kaine has repeatedly reiterated his support for Israel's right to defend itself against Hamas following Hamas' horrific October 7 terrorist attacks and Iran's strikes on Israeli soil, and the need to address the worsening humanitarian crisis in Gaza, and secure a deal to release hostages and establish a ceasefire in Gaza."

In an October 2023 op-ed Cao said, "In the days to come, we will watch Israel fight to preserve its freedom and security. We will see more bloodshed and wonder how many more American lives will be lost at the hands of ruthless terrorists. And we'll either learn from it or continue to pretend this will never happen again on U.S. soil. I hope it's the former."