

Use of KC Halls & Property

This memo focuses on proper uses of a KC Hall and, conversely, improper uses of a KC Hall. It is meant to give guidance to those local councils that have control of their KC Hall, be it through a “home corporation” set up to own the KC Hall with the local council as the primary tenant or otherwise.

If a home corporation has been established, that home corporation has control of the KC Hall and the use of the same. However, it is important to note that the primary tenant of the KC Hall is the local council. Further, the home corporation should be established in a way that the decision making of the home corporation is by the same people that are members in good standing with the local council. As such, this memo is properly addressed to home corporations in charge of certain KC Halls, just as it is addressed to our local councils having the use of KC Halls across the State of Iowa.

The Knights of Columbus strives to be the right arm to the church and to promote the economic and spiritual strength of families. To be a Knight is to be a practical Catholic adhering to the teachings of the Church. It is therefore imperative that we as Knights use our talents and our treasures to and for the benefit of the Church. Our KC Halls are an example of one of these treasures. It is, therefore, altogether fitting that we review certain unchangeable truths which have been adopted by the Knights of Columbus and which must be upheld in our KC Halls.

Catholic social teaching maintains that there are some unchangeable truths, such as the dignity of every human person, and the right to life, from conception to natural death; the primacy of authentic marriage and the family founded upon it; and our obligation in solidarity to one another, and most especially, to the poor and needy in our midst. These truths can be known by all men and women because they are revealed in the Natural Law and expounded upon in Revelation.

These truths obligate us all, however not all truths have the same moral weight as abortion and euthanasia. There is a hierarchy of values with some being more fundamental than the others. Then Cardinal Ratzinger declared in 2004 “There may be a legitimate diversity of opinion even among Catholics about waging war and applying the death penalty, but not, however, with regard to abortion and euthanasia.” These are intrinsically wrong because they destroy innocent human life. Children in the womb are our first neighbors. They are also, in the words of Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, the ‘poorest of the poor’.

Our commitment to respect every human life from conception to natural death represents a framework through which we must evaluate every other issue included appropriate use of KC halls. In fulfilling the Knight’s mission to be practical Catholics in union with the Church there are certain evils which must be opposed by every authentic Knight as being the antithesis to what we stand for:

- a) Abortion
- b) Embryonic stem cell research
- c) Euthanasia
- d) Same-sex marriage

(Herein referred to as the “Prohibited Issues”.)

A KC Hall should not be rented to an organization that has a record for advocating the Prohibited Issues. For example, a home corporation would be well within its rights to deny Planned Parenthood the use of a KC Hall even without knowing the specific speakers on the agenda because it is clear where Planned Parenthood stands on abortion.

A KC Hall should not be rented to a person that has a record for advocating the Prohibited Issues. There are a number of candidates that have been in their record clear in support abortion and examples can be made of Democrats and Republicans alike. These candidates should not be able to use a KC Hall because of their position on abortion. The same test can be applied to these candidates with respect to the rest of the Prohibited Issues.

A KC Hall should not be rented to an organization that will allow speakers to advocate on, or will perform some activity to advocate for, the Prohibited Issues. An example here may include the Iowa Democratic Party, which has adopted certain Prohibited Issues such as “equal marital rights for all consenting adults regardless of sexual orientation” and “preservation of Roe v. Wade”. However, the Iowa Democratic Party requires adherence to a majority of its planks on its platform, but not all planks. Therefore, a local Democratic group, or a Democratic candidate, may be a properly admitted for the use of a KC Hall as long as the local Democratic group or candidate disavows the Iowa Democratic Party’s stand on the Prohibited Issues.

One might ask if these issues will subject the home corporation or the local council to liability for discrimination. Certainly, we cannot deny equal access to public facilities on account of race, color, religion, or national origin. But we are not doing that. We are denying access to our facilities on account of the stands taken by certain persons or groups on the Prohibited Issues.

With respect to these situations, it becomes important to ask questions. Properly identify the person or group renting the KC Hall. If the person or group has a record for advocating Prohibited Issues, the person or group must be denied use of the KC Hall. If the record is not clear, ask more questions of the person or group in order to get to the bottom of their stand on the Prohibited Issues.

Conversely KC Halls should be made available at reasonable and prevailing rates to groups and individuals who support the dignity of every human person, the right to life from conception to natural death and the primacy of authentic marriage.

Respectfully submitted,

John M. Murray
State Advocate
Iowa State Council
Knights of Columbus

Michael P. Gaspers
State Deputy
Iowa State Council
Knights of Columbus