



Voters are reflected in a window near an American flag as they mark their ballots during early voting in the general election on Nov. 1, 2024, at City Hall in Providence, R.I. (AP/Steven Senne)

by NCR Staff

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Editor's note: National Catholic Reporter is covering the 2024 U.S. election live coast to coast until there is a winner. Here, you can find regular updates from NCR and Global Sisters Report staff, including NCR senior correspondent Heidi Schlumpf reporting from Wisconsin and NCR staff reporter Brian Fraga covering developments in Pennsylvania.

We also will be sharing some of NCR's best campaign coverage. All election news and commentary can be found here: <https://www.ncronline.org/feature-series/election-2024/stories>.

4:00 a.m. ET

Obama's appeals to faith, character in Milwaukee resonate with some Catholic voters

By HEIDI SCHLUMPF

MILWAUKEE — On the last day of early voting in Wisconsin, former President Barack Obama campaigned in the crucial swing state, saying "values matter" and "character matters" when choosing between Vice President Kamala Harris and former President Donald Trump.

One of the "most disturbing things about this election," Obama said on Nov. 3, "is how we seem to have just set aside the values we were taught."

Obama cited Trump's [falsehoods](#) about the federal emergency response to those affected by Hurricane Helene last month.



President Barack Obama speaks to a crowd of nearly 5,000 at the Baird Center in downtown Milwaukee Nov. 3. (Samuel Butler)

"At a time when people were desperate and needed help, why would you try to exploit that for political gain?" Obama asked. "No matter where you stand on the issues, no matter what party you belong to, why would you go along with that?"

The former president touched on the economy, immigration, health care, abortion and reproductive rights, which got some of the loudest cheers from the crowd of nearly 5,000.

Obama noted state abortion bans, [rising](#) infant mortality rates, and doctors who are afraid to give life-saving treatment for at-risk mothers since the overturning of *Roe vs. Wade*.

"I've always said I respect those who, for religious or ethical reasons, would not consider terminating their own pregnancy," Obama said. "But if nothing else, freedom must surely mean that women themselves get to make these profoundly intimate decisions, not politicians."

Catholic voter Janet Radtke, a retired registered nurse from Germantown, said reproductive rights was one of the main reasons she supports Harris. "I believe in pro-life and pro-choice," she said, noting the difficult cases of rape, incest and the threats to the life of the mother.

"Sometimes it's not a black-and-white issue," Radtke said.

Lorie Skeff, a member of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Milwaukee, said she supports Harris and running mate Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz because she believes they will bring unity as well as practical policies to Wisconsin. "A lot of great things are happening in Minnesota that I wish we had in Wisconsin," she said.

Skeff also said the Democratic ticket aligns with her belief in the need to "love thy neighbor as thyself."

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