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Some Catholic footnotes on Election Day 2012

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I just got word from a friend who is a journalist in Fargo, N.D.: Heidi Heitkamp won the Senate race there over Rick Berg. You may remember her: She was attacked in every way except the explicit use of her name by the Catholic bishop of Bismarck, David Kagan.

This is just one in a string of election losses for Catholic bishops. In July, they tried to launch a campaign for what they called "religious freedom," questioning provisions of Obamacare that require employers to include contraceptive coverage in employee health insurance plans. It fizzled, and President Barack Obama's win assures that health care reform will go forward.

Several bishops campaigned against anyone who did not agree with them on their "non-negotiable" issues and warned that a vote for a candidate who was pro-choice or in favor of same-sex marriage might endanger one's immortal soul. That was a not-so-veiled reference to Obama and most House and Senate Democrats. And Catholics apparently paid little attention; Obama and most Senate Democrats won.

In Maryland, Maine, Washington and Minnesota, bishops campaigned against marriage equality for gay and lesbian people. In all four states, in an unprecedented turn of events, marriage equality won the popular vote in the referenda. Another episcopal loss.

So when we look at the big losers and winners on Election Day 2012, the Catholic bishops are big losers.

Nuns on the Bus, on the other hand, were real winners in the Catholic world with their emphasis on economic justice. When did you say their next bus would hit the road?

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