

This Was the Most Telling Moment of the Contentious 'Veep Debate'

The vice presidential debate Tuesday night was pretty much a disaster for everyone not named Mike Pence.

From questions about whether or not he was on mind-altering substances at the start of the event to his constant interruptions—57 times, not counting the dozens of times he simply talked over his Republican counterpart—Democratic vice presidential nominee U.S. Sen. Tim Kaine (D-Va.) had an extremely bad debate. That's the consensus view from the pundits, social media and even Frank Luntz' "undecided voter" focus group.

Moderator Elaine Quijano of CBS News frequently lost control and couldn't keep Kaine on subject, and the times she did try to exert herself, she was talking over Pence—who was just trying to get Kaine to stop interrupting him. But she does get credit for asking perhaps the most important question of the debate near the end of the 90-minute event.

"You have both been open about the role that faith has played in your lives," she said. "Can you express in detail a time that you have struggled to balance your personal faith and the public policy decision?"

Kaine was the first to respond to the question:

That is an easy one for me. I grew up with a great Irish Catholic council. I was educated by Jesuits. I worked with Jesuit missionaries in Honduras now nearly 35 years ago and they were the heroes of my life. I tried it to practice my religion in a very devout way. But I don't believe in this nation, a First Amendment nation, where we don't raise any

religion over the other, that the doctrines of any one religion should be mandated for everyone.

Having a struggle in my faith life was that the Catholic Church is against the death penalty and so am I. But I was the governor of the state, and the state says there was a death penalty. So, I had to grapple with that when I was running for governor and I was attacked pretty strongly because of my position. But, I looked the voters of Virginia in the eye, and said, I am not going to change my religious practice to get one vote, but I will uphold the law.

And I was elected and I did. It was very difficult to allow executions to go forth, but in certain situations where I did not believe there was a case for clemency, I told Virginia voters I would uphold the law and I did. It is difficult for those of us who have these faith lives, we don't feel we can just substitute our views.

Pence gave a very different response:

Well, it is a wonderful question ... my Christian faith is at the very heart of who I am. I was also raised in a wonderful family of faith. It was church on Sunday morning and grace before dinner. But my Christian faith became real for me when I made a personal decision for Christ when I was a freshman in college. I have tried to live that out, however imperfectly, every day of my life since. With my wife by my side, we followed a calling into public service, where we tried to keep the faith with our values that we cherish.

And, with regard to when I struggled, I appreciate and I have a great deal of respect for Senator Kaine's sincere faith. That is shared. But for me, I would tell you— the sanctity of life proceeds out of that ancient principle of God. I tried to stand for the ancient principle of the sanctity of life. I am also very pleased that Indiana became the most-adoption state. But what I can't understand is

Hillary Clinton—how she can support a process like partial-birth abortion.

I know you hold pro-life views personally. At the very idea that a child almost born into the world could still have their life taken from them, I cannot in conscience [understand] a party that supports that. I know you have historically opposed taxpayer funding for abortion, but Hillary Clinton wants to repeal the long-standing provision when we said we would not use taxpayer dollars to fund abortion. For me, my faith informs my life. For me, it all begins with cherishing the dignity, the worth, the value of all human life.

This led to a deeper discussion about abortion, in general, as Kaine invoked his running mate, Hillary Clinton, and her Methodist faith while defending women's "right" to choose whether or not to kill their unborn children. Pence, on the other hand, lauded his running mate, Donald Trump, and his pro-life position.

"There is a choice here, and it is a choice on life," he said through frequent interruptions by Kaine. "I could not be more proud to be standing with Donald Trump, who is standing with the right to life ...

"I have appreciated the fact that you support the amendment that bans the use for taxpayer funding in the past. But that is not Hillary Clinton's view ... Society can be judged by how it deals with its most vulnerable. The aged, the infirm, the unborn. I cannot say how happy I am to be standing with a pro-life candidate, Donald Trump."