

Voter's Guide Discussion *(General Considerations before Using)*

1. Purpose of guides

- o Provide information about each candidate seeking office and selected initiatives/propositions (Job 13:9)
- o Address each candidate's position as accurately as possible on issues of importance to the Christian community (Prov 5:21; Matt 6:33). These include:
 - o Taxes
 - o Abortion/sanctity of life
 - o Homosexual issues
 - o Public and private school choice/vouchers
 - o Illegal aliens
 - o Term limits
 - o Other...
- o Address moral issues that will give insights into the candidates true character and decision predisposition (Matt 7:15-20)
- o Provide accountability of the candidate's positions on issues of concern so comparisons can be made with their record in office afterwards (Ecc 5:1-7)
- o Provide a convenient summary that can be taken into the polling booths to vote with

2. Shortcomings

- o Specific experience of the candidate for the office is not typically addressed - need to still read about them and calibrate on their qualifications - not everyone is gifted as leaders or administrators (Prov 22:29; Rom 12:6-8)
- o Only a selected group of issues/questions is covered. These may or may not be the ones of concern
- o Past history does not ensure continued, consistent stance on a particular subject (bait and switch) (Psalm 118:8-9)
- o Moral stances may not imply expertise to operate effectively within the political structure, but it does help assess whether the person desires to have integrity in his work and a righteous goal (Acts 4:13)
- o Some candidates may not have responded in time, or it was lost - therefore not accounted for
- o Typically, the actual question asked of each candidate is not available, only a short summary statement of the issue under question. You have no opportunity to determine if it was a fair question or not
- o There is no opportunity for the candidate to give the reason for their response to the questions, or what basis they are operating from, however, this also means that a solid "yes" or "no" means a great deal since the candidate is willing to commit one way or the other and not waffle (Matt 5:37)
- o Voting records are not necessarily indicative of a person's stance on an issue, since proposed bills and laws may have had other "riders" that were offensive and caused the entire bill to be rejected
- o Use of the guide can become a crutch for a person to lean upon, vice doing their own homework (candidate experience as an example)(Prov 21:5)
- o Tendency is to vote for an organization (which group supports who) vice the person themselves

3. Why are they important?

- o There is generally an appalling lack of objective investigation made into specific candidates and their positions (Acts 6:3)
- o Many times a small percentage change in voting patterns can have significant impact on the results
- o They present consistent questions to all candidates equally (e.g. 1 Tim 3:1-13)
- o They provide a common format of response from all candidates, uncluttered with rhetoric (Prov 10:19a)
- o They can provide a focus for the Christian community in the vacuum of anything else available

4. What issues would you choose to make important if you were to talk to a candidate? (1 John 4:1-3)

- o Are they a Christian and do they subscribe to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in their lives?
- o How would their lives measure up according to 1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9; 2 Peter 5:2-3
- o What church do they attend and are they in good standing? Who do we call to verify?
- o Do they believe in the authority of scripture in all matters of faith and practice?
- o What is their view of the "traditional" family?
- o Do they believe in the sanctity of human life?
- o Do they oppose special privileges for homosexuals and other adulterous behavior?
- o Do they believe that Judeo-Christian ethics should be restored to the public arena?
- o What experience do they have in public office or with the major issues addressed by the position?
- o What is their previous voting record on the issues of most importance to you?
- o What is the quality and character of supporters that they have gathered around them (Prov 13:20)
- o Do they have an official statement of their stance on issues?
- o Others questions?

5. Other publications and information

- o Must still do our own homework
- o Be careful of any publication you receive
 - o Check out their sources
 - o What "agenda" if any do they have
 - o Do they try and give the appearance of objectivity yet not provide it ("Nonpartisan Candidate Evaluation Council, Inc." example)
- o Begin early and don't wait until the last moment to decide
- o Don't be swayed by last minute media blitzes that make new "startling" claims
- o Don't just go by what organizations support a candidate, sometimes support is provided due to contributions to the organization
- o Relative to propositions, the same general principles apply. However, try and determine the basic Biblical principles that should be used to develop a position for or against
- o If at all possible, seek the advice of people that you trust and that have personal knowledge of the issue or candidate in question