



Regular participation in local, state, and federal elections is a central component of civic life. But decisions about who to vote for, and why, are often challenging. Despite growing political polarization, most American communities are religiously diverse. As a voter, you have the power to ask candidates seeking to represent you – to be *your* voice – about their personal values, how their beliefs will affect their public service, and whether they will respect differing religious beliefs and affiliations once elected.

### **FROM SHARED VALUES TO PUBLIC POLICY**

Should values be important in an election? Yes, by all means. But whose values? Voters across the political spectrum have the duty to assess whether a candidate's policy proposals would expand our shared moral foundation.

The values that should be important in an election are those that promote the common good, not those that seek to establish the sectarian morality of one particular religious or political group as the standard to which all Americans are held. These values include a commitment to: strengthening democracy; nurturing integrity in civic and economic life; allowing all citizens, not just a few, to experience the blessings of democracy; and strengthening our national commitment to religious freedom.

Your challenge, a voter and perhaps as a candidate, is to root your political discussions in values of economic justice, compassion, mercy, humility, justice, peace-making and reconciliation. Try using this "Moral Audit" when examining policy proposals. You can also use this list as a touchstone for explaining your support of or opposition to particular policies in conversations with friends and loved ones.

### **CONDUCTING A "MORAL AUDIT" OF A POLICY PROPOSAL**

Candidates for office put forth wide-ranging proposals for some of our most challenging problems. As you make up your mind about who to support and why, ask yourself whether their proposed solution will:

- Advance a positive vision of America?
- Position our nation as a friend of justice?
- Affirm the inherent dignity of all people?
- Protect the constitutional guarantee of the separation of religion and government?
- Quell the rising tide of hate and bigotry?
- Create jobs and economic opportunities rooted in fairness?
- Distribute wealth in a manner that improves the lives of those most in need?
- Protect the environment, to ensure the health and safety of generations to come?

### **ABOUT THE VOTE 2020 INITIATIVE**

There's a lot of pressure these days for candidates to "reach out to people of faith" or "incorporate the language of religion." Interfaith Alliance's Vote 2020 initiative offers tips and resources for voters, candidates, and houses of worship on navigating thorny issues around the role of religion in partisan elections.

Learn more at: <https://interfaithalliance.org/resources/electionyearresources/>.