

A photograph showing three black microphones with foam covers in the foreground, slightly out of focus. In the background, there is a large crowd of people holding many American flags, creating a bokeh effect with red, white, and blue colors.

FAITH-BASED CANDIDATE VETTING GUIDE FOR TEXANS

QUESTIONS FOR EVALUATING POLITICAL CANDIDATES

TEXAS

The logo consists of a vertical black bar on the left containing four white stars. To the right of this bar, the words "CITIZENS", "DEFENDING", and "FREEDOM" are stacked vertically in a bold, red, sans-serif font. A registered trademark symbol (®) is located at the top right of the word "CITIZENS".

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ABOUT THIS VETTING GUIDE

Purpose

This comprehensive vetting guide is designed to help Texas pastors, citizens, organizations, and communities thoroughly evaluate candidates running for various elected offices. The questions are structured to reveal candidates' core values, constitutional understanding, policy positions, and character—going beyond campaign rhetoric to understand how they would actually govern.

Who This Guide Serves

- Voters seeking to make informed decisions based on substantive candidate evaluation
- Organizations conducting candidate forums, interviews, or endorsement processes
- Pastors and Faith Leaders educating their congregations on civic engagement and candidate evaluation
- Community Groups hosting candidate meet-and-greets or town halls
- Citizens who want to engage meaningfully with candidates at all levels of government

How to Use This Guide

The document is organized by office type, from federal positions down to local school boards. Each section includes:

- Background questions to understand the candidate's motivation and qualifications
- Policy-specific questions relevant to that office's responsibilities
- Philosophical questions to understand underlying worldview and decision-making framework
- Lightning round statements for quick position clarification

Key Features

- Questions progress from broad principles to specific policy positions
- Includes constitutional knowledge assessments for appropriate offices
- Covers both practical governance issues and foundational values
- Designed to elicit substantive responses rather than political talking points relevant to Texas governance

This guide encourages thoughtful dialogue between candidates and constituents, promoting transparency and informed civic engagement at every level of government.

GENERAL QUESTIONS ON VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

Same-Sex Marriage

- How do you define marriage?

Abortion

- When do you believe life begins, and how would that belief guide your policy decisions?
- What is your position on protecting life at various stages of development?

Religious Freedom

- Do you support conscience protections for American citizens in their businesses? Ex: Should teachers be forced to use gender-affirming pronouns?
- What is your position on requiring individuals to act against their religious beliefs in professional settings?
- What is your opinion on the recent law passed that requires the Ten Commandments to be displayed in every Texas classroom?

Education and Parental Rights

- What role do you think the public school system plays in directing children's morals, values and beliefs?
- What is your perspective on parental involvement in their children's education?

Fiscal Responsibility

- How do you view your role as a steward of taxpayer funds?
- What measures would you implement to eliminate wasteful government spending?

Personal Foundation and Character

- What written work has most significantly impacted your life philosophy?
- How do you personally seek wisdom and guidance when facing difficult decisions?
- What principles do you turn to when facing moral dilemmas in governance?

Priority Setting and Resource Allocation

- If you had to choose your top three policy priorities for your first term, what would they be and why?
- When facing limited resources, how do you decide which community needs take precedence?
- How do you balance competing demands from different constituency groups?
- If you had to cut the budget by 10%, which areas would you protect and which would you reduce first?
- How do you prioritize between immediate community needs and long-term investments?
- What criteria do you use to determine if a program or service is essential?

Competing Values and Vision

- When economic development conflicts with community values, which takes priority and why?
- How do you define community standards?
- What legacy do you hope to leave for future generations of Americans?

CONSTITUTIONAL KNOWLEDGE QUESTIONS

Constitutional Interpretation

- Do you view the Constitution as a living document that changes with the times, or as having fixed principles that endure?

Constitutional Republic vs. Democracy

- Explain the difference in a constitutional republic and a democracy.
- Do you believe county elections should be administered by the people through elected representatives or by appointed officials?

Federalism and State Rights

- What powers do you believe should remain exclusively with the states versus the federal government?
- How would you work within the system to address federal mandates you consider unconstitutional? (Ex: Title IX)
- What is your position on vaccine mandates?
- What is your understanding of the Texas Constitution and how it differs from the federal Constitution?

Separation of Powers

- How do you view the proper balance between the three branches of government, and what concerns do you have about any branch overstepping its constitutional bounds?

Individual Rights and Constitutional Limits

- Do you believe constitutional rights are individual rights or collective rights, and how does that distinction matter in governance?

Election Integrity and Constitutional Principles

- What measures would you support to ensure only eligible citizens can vote in elections?
- Do you believe Texas elections are safe and secure? Yes or No. Explain your answer.
- Who do you believe should run elections - Federal or State authorities?
- Do you believe the public should have access to all election records not tied to personally identifiable information?

CORE WORLDVIEW QUESTIONS

Natural Law and Universal Principles

- Do you believe moral truths transcend cultural trends and popular opinion?

Human Nature and Purpose

- How do you view personal responsibility versus government dependency?

Truth and Knowledge

- Do you believe in absolute truth, or do you think truth is relative to each individual?
- What sources do you turn to for wisdom when facing complex moral decisions?

Community and Social Order

- What institutions do you believe are essential for a healthy society?
- Do you believe society benefits from shared moral foundations?

Authority and Service

- How do you view your accountability as a public servant - to whom are you ultimately answerable?
- What motivates you to sacrifice personal time and comfort for public service?

Hope and Future

- Do you believe the future can be better than the present, and what gives you that confidence?

QUESTIONS FOR FEDERAL OFFICE CANDIDATES (CONGRESS/SENATE)

Background and Motivation

- Why are you seeking this office?
- If elected/re-elected, what do you want to accomplish while in office?
- Please tell us about your values and belief system, what it is based upon, and how you developed it.
- What qualities and experiences make you the best candidate for this position?
- If an incumbent candidate - What did you want to accomplish in your last term that didn't get accomplished?

Policy Positions

- What is your position on the following topics?:
 - First Amendment & Religious Expression
 - Second Amendment Rights
 - Tenth Amendment and Federalism
 - Federal Budget & Federal Deficit
 - Taxation & Current Tax Rates
 - Land Rights & Eminent Domain
 - Education & School Choice
 - Immigration Policy
 - Transportation & Federal Funding
 - Abortion Policy

Specific Federal Issues

- What is your view on diversity, equity, and inclusion programs in federal policy?
- How will you work to address or improve the current federal budget process?
- What measures will you support or initiate to address the federal debt and deficit? What is your position on raising the federal debt ceiling?
- What are the most pressing issues facing the nation over the next 3-5 years, and how will you address these issues?
- What are your thoughts on the current immigration controversy in the country?

LIGHTNING ROUND: Position Statements (Please indicate YES/No/No Opinion)

- I believe a balanced federal budget should be a priority. **Yes / No / No Opinion**
- I believe that transparency in government spending is important, and I will support efforts to make federal expenditures publicly accessible. **Yes / No / No Opinion**
- I support school choice options including vouchers and homeschooling. **Yes / No / No Opinion**
- I support constitutional carry and Second Amendment rights. **Yes / No / No Opinion**
- I believe property rights should be strongly protected against federal overreach. **Yes / No / No Opinion**
- I support reducing federal regulations on businesses and individuals. **Yes / No / No Opinion**
- I believe states should have greater authority over issues not specifically enumerated in the Constitution. **Yes / No / No Opinion**
- I support term limits for members of Congress. **Yes / No / No Opinion**

QUESTIONS FOR TEXAS STATE OFFICE CANDIDATES (LEGISLATURE, STATEWIDE OFFICES)

Background and Motivation

- Why are you seeking this office?
- If elected/re-elected, what do you want to accomplish while in office?
- Please tell us about your values and belief system, what it is based upon, and how you developed it.
- If an incumbent, what three significant things did you accomplish in your last term? If a challenger, what three things would you do differently than the incumbent?

Qualifications and Civic Engagement

- Are you a registered voter in your district? Please describe your voting history and civic engagement.

State Policy Positions

- What is your position on the following topics?:
 - Taxation & Current Tax Rates
 - Education & School Choice
 - Immigration Policy
 - Abortion Policy
 - Border Security
 - Texas Power Grid
 - Second Amendment Rights
 - Gambling & Gaming
 - Land Rights & Eminent Domain
 - Election Integrity
 - Sexualization of Texas kids

Specific State Issues

- What is your view on diversity, equity, and inclusion programs in state policy?
- What is your position on the current practice of local elected officials using public funds to lobby the legislature?
- What is your position regarding qualified teachers having the right to carry concealed handguns in schools?
- What are the most pressing issues facing Texas over the next 3-5 years, and how will you address these issues?

State Governance and Operations

- How do you view the relationship between state and local government authority?
- What is your approach to working with members of the opposite party on legislation?
- How do you balance competing interests when crafting state policy?
- What role should public input play in the legislative process?
- What bills did you author or support with your vote in the Texas Legislative session that improved Election Integrity? Our Education System?

QUESTIONS FOR TEXAS STATE OFFICE CANDIDATES (LEGISLATURE, STATEWIDE OFFICES)

LIGHTNING ROUND: Position Statements (Please indicate YES/NO/No Opinion)

- I believe a balanced state budget should be a priority. **Yes / No / No Opinion**
- I believe that transparency in government spending is important, and I will support efforts to make state expenditures publicly accessible. **Yes / No / No Opinion**
- I support school choice options including vouchers and homeschooling. **Yes / No / No Opinion**
- I support constitutional carry and Second Amendment rights. **Yes / No / No Opinion**
- I believe property rights should be strongly protected against government overreach. **Yes / No / No Opinion**
- I support reducing state regulations on businesses and individuals. **Yes / No / No Opinion**
- I believe local communities should have less authority over issues that primarily affect them.
Yes / No / No Opinion
- I support term limits for state legislators. **Yes / No / No Opinion**
- I support LGBTQIA+ pride month. **Yes / No / No Opinion**
- I support legislation that limits gun rights in certain situations. **Yes / No / No Opinion**
- I support providing free education and medical services to all foreigners (legal and illegal). **Yes / No / No Opinion**

QUESTIONS FOR COUNTY CANDIDATES (COUNTY JUDGE & COMMISSIONER)

Background and Motivation

- Why are you seeking this office?
- If elected/re-elected, what do you want to accomplish while in office?
- Please tell us about your values and belief system, what it is based upon, and how you developed it.
- If an incumbent, what three significant things did you accomplish in your last term? If a challenger, what three things would you do differently than the incumbent?

Qualifications and Experience

- Are you a registered voter in your County? Please describe your voting history and civic engagement in local elections.
- What is the role of the Commissioners Court and what is the primary function and role of a County Commissioner?

Policy Positions

What is your position on the following topics?:

- Taxation & Current Tax Rates
- Education & School Choice
- Immigration Policy
- Water Issues
- Transportation & Toll Roads
- Second Amendment Rights
- Healthcare & Indigent Healthcare
- Land Rights & Eminent Domain
- Election Integrity

County Administration

- How would you ensure responsible management of county resources?
- What principles guide your approach to county budgeting and spending?
- How would you handle disagreements between commissioners with different perspectives?
- What is your position on the current practice of local elected officials using public funds to lobby the legislature?

Future Planning and Economic Development

- What are the most pressing issues facing the county over the next 3-5 years, and how will you address these issues?
- What can be done by the Commissioners Court to encourage entrepreneurs/businesses to relocate to your county?

QUESTIONS FOR COUNTY CANDIDATES (COUNTY JUDGE & COMMISSIONER)

Land Use and Development

- How would you balance property rights with community planning standards?
- What is your approach to zoning decisions affecting various institutions and organizations?
- How would you evaluate development proposals that generate community concern?
- What policies would you support regarding community character and development?

County Election Administration

- What is your understanding of election administration responsibilities?
- How do you view the relationship between elected officials and administrative staff in election management?
- What measures would you support to ensure election integrity and security?
- Have you ever attended a Logic and Accuracy test? Does it give you full confidence that our elections are secure?
- What is your position on hand-marked paper ballots vs. ballot marking devices?
- Do you believe elections should be canvassed before the post-election audit is completed?
- How familiar are you with the Texas Election Code and state election requirements?

Position Statements (Please indicate YES/NO/No Opinion)

- I believe a balanced budget is critical for county government. **Yes / No / No Opinion**
- I believe that transparency in government spending is important, and I will support efforts to make government expenditures publicly accessible. **Yes / No / No Opinion**
- I support constitutional carry and Second Amendment rights. **Yes / No / No Opinion**
- I believe property rights should be strongly protected against government overreach. **Yes / No / No Opinion**

QUESTIONS FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT CANDIDATES (SHERIFF, CONSTABLE, ETC.)

Background and Motivation

- Why are you seeking this office?
- If elected/re-elected, what are your key plans for the office in the next year and next 3-5 years?
- Please tell us about your values and belief system, what it is based upon, and how you developed it.
- If an incumbent, what three significant things did you accomplish in your last term? If a challenger, what three things would you do differently than the incumbent?

Qualifications and Experience

- Are you a registered voter in your county? Please describe your voting history and civic engagement.
- What are the primary duties of this office, and what laws or policies establish those duties?
- Describe your key accomplishments as a law enforcement administrator or officer.
- In previous law enforcement roles, what challenges did you face and what obstacles were you able to overcome?

Law Enforcement Philosophy and Management

- How do you approach situations involving persons with mental illness or intellectual/developmental disabilities?
- What is your approach to community policing and building relationships with diverse communities?
- How do you balance public safety priorities with budget constraints and resource limitations?
- Can you define what a Constitutional Sheriff is? And do you consider yourself to be one? Why?
- What is your position on deputizing citizens?
- What ideas do you have to improve our community's safety?

Personnel and Accountability

- What is your approach to officer training and professional development?
- How do you handle internal investigations and disciplinary matters?
- What measures do you support to ensure transparency and accountability in law enforcement?
- How do you approach recruitment and retention of qualified officers?

Policy and Operations

- What is your position on the use of body cameras and other technology in law enforcement?
- How do you approach cooperation with other law enforcement agencies and jurisdictions?
- What role should community input play in law enforcement policies and priorities?
- How do you balance officer safety with community engagement and public access?

LIGHTNING ROUND: Position Statements (Please indicate YES/NO/No Opinion)

- I believe transparency in government spending is important, and I will support efforts to make departmental expenditures publicly accessible. **Yes / No / No Opinion**
- I believe a balanced budget is important for effective law enforcement operations. **Yes / No / No Opinion**
- I believe law enforcement agencies should have clear policies and procedures for handling misconduct allegations against officers. **Yes / No / No Opinion**
- I support community policing initiatives that build relationships between officers and residents. **Yes / No / No Opinion**
- I believe mental health training should be a priority for law enforcement officers. **Yes / No / No Opinion**

QUESTIONS FOR JUDICIAL CANDIDATES

Background and Motivation

- Why are you seeking this judicial office?
- Why do you believe you are the most qualified candidate for this position?

Qualifications and Experience

- Are you a registered voter in your county? Please describe your voting history and civic engagement.
- How long have you practiced law? Please share any board certifications, awards, or honors you have received relevant to the practice of law.
- Have you ever been arrested for or charged with a felony? If so, please explain.
- Have you ever been disciplined, reprimanded, or cited for a breach of ethics or unprofessional conduct by a court, administrative agency, bar association, disciplinary committee, or other professional group? If yes, please explain.

Judicial Philosophy and Approach

- What is your judicial philosophy?
- How do you approach utilizing and weighing constitutional text versus case law in determining cases?
- When do you believe a judge is justified in striking down a legislative act?
- Please name a Supreme Court Justice and a local judge whom you admire and explain why.
- Choose a Supreme Court decision that you believe was significant (either positively or negatively) and share your analysis of the decision.

Judicial Conduct and Ethics

- How do you ensure impartiality when presiding over cases involving parties or issues you may have personal views about?

Specific Legal Issues

- What is your perspective on the appropriate balance between parental rights and state interests in matters involving children, including education?
- How do you approach balancing individual rights with community interests in your judicial decision-making?
- What role should precedent play in judicial decisions, and when might it be appropriate to reconsider established precedent?
- How do you handle cases where statutory language may be ambiguous or unclear?
- What do you believe the law says about:
 - Deportation of Illegal Immigrants
 - Citizen Birthrights
 - Title IX
 - The Rights of Fathers
 - AG authority to prosecute election crimes
 - Parental Rights

QUESTIONS FOR CITY CANDIDATES (MAYOR & CITY COUNCIL)

Background and Motivation

- Why are you seeking this municipal office?
- If elected/re-elected, what do you want to accomplish during your term?
- Please tell us about your values and belief system, what it is based upon, and how you developed it.
- If an incumbent, what three significant things did you accomplish in your last term? If a challenger, what three things would you do differently than the current leadership?

Qualifications and Experience

- Are you a registered voter in the city? Please describe your civic engagement and community involvement.
- What experience do you have that qualifies you for this position?
- How familiar are you with the city's budget, ordinances, and current challenges?

Municipal Priorities and Vision

- What do you see as the city's greatest strengths and biggest challenges?
- What are the most pressing issues facing the city over the next 3-5 years, and how will you address them?
- How do you envision the city's growth and development over the next decade?
- What role should citizen input play in city planning and policy decisions?

Public Safety and Services

- How do you balance the right to peaceably assemble vs the rights of citizens to safety and protection of property?

Economic Development and Business

- What is your approach to attracting and retaining businesses in the city?
- What criteria would you use when considering business incentives or tax abatements?
- How would you balance economic development with quality of life concerns?
- What role should the city play in supporting local businesses and entrepreneurs?

Budget and Finance

- How would you approach the city's budget priorities and fiscal management?
- What is your position on taxation levels and city fees?
- How would you evaluate city spending and ensure accountability?
- What is your approach to long-term financial planning and debt management?

Infrastructure and Development

- What are your priorities for city infrastructure improvements?
- How would you approach zoning decisions and development approvals?
- What is your position on transportation planning and traffic management?
- How would you balance development with environmental and community concerns?

QUESTIONS FOR CITY CANDIDATES (MAYOR & CITY COUNCIL)

Governance and Transparency

- How would you ensure transparency and accountability in city government?
- What is your approach to working with council members who may have different views?
- How would you handle conflicts between local preferences and state or federal requirements?
- What measures would you support to increase citizen engagement in city government?

LIGHTNING ROUND: Position Statements (Please indicate YES/NO/No Opinion)

- I believe city budgets and spending should be transparent and easily accessible to residents.
Yes / No / No Opinion
- I support competitive bidding processes for city contracts and services. **Yes / No / No Opinion**
- I believe public safety should be a top priority in city budgeting. **Yes / No / No Opinion**
- I support citizen input and public participation in city council meetings. **Yes / No / No Opinion**
- I believe the city should maintain a balanced budget without relying on deficit spending. **Yes / No / No Opinion**
- I support economic development initiatives that create jobs while preserving community character.
Yes / No / No Opinion

QUESTIONS FOR SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATES

Background and Motivation

- Why are you seeking this school board position?
- If elected/re-elected, what do you want to accomplish during your term?
- Please tell us about your values and belief system, what it is based upon, and how you developed it.
- If an incumbent, what three significant things did you accomplish in your last term? If a challenger, what three things would you do differently than the current board?

Qualifications and Experience

- Are you a registered voter in the school district? Please describe your civic engagement and involvement in education.
- What experience do you have that qualifies you for this position?
- How familiar are you with the district's budget, policies, and current challenges?
- Please list all leadership positions you've held.
- How familiar are you with the Texas Education Code and state education requirements?

Educational Philosophy and Priorities

- What do you see as the primary purpose of public education?
- How do you view the relationship between academic achievement and character development?
- What are the most pressing issues facing the district over the next 3-5 years, and how will you address them?
- What is your position on various school choice options, including charter schools and voucher programs?
- Do you believe the school system is responsible for developing the values, morals and beliefs of students?
- Do you believe public education is responsible for the mental health of students?
- Do you support the abolition of the Department of Education?
- Do you believe in local control of public schools? And if so, how do you define local?
- Do you think school board members should be paid?
- Do you think school board elections should be partisan or non-partisan? Why?

Curriculum and Policy

- What is your approach to curriculum development and adoption?
- What is your position on diversity, equity, and inclusion programs in schools?
- How would you handle requests for religious accommodations or expression in schools?
- What is your position on teaching family values or religious beliefs in public schools?
- What is your approach to sex education and gender identity instruction in schools?
- Do you think schools have a responsibility to protect students from sexually explicit materials in their school libraries? (Not pornography, sexually explicit materials)
- What is your position on allowing biological boys in girls' bathrooms? And vice versa?
- What is your position on teachers or school counselors assisting in the social transitioning of a student?
- Can a boy become a girl?

QUESTIONS FOR SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATES

Parental Rights and Involvement

- What circumstances, if any, would justify excluding parents from decisions about their child's education?
- What is your position on parental notification when children request to use different pronouns or facilities at school?
- What role should parents play in developing school policies and curriculum decisions?
- How do you balance parental rights with other considerations in school policy?
- In what scenario would you allow a parent the authority to opt their child out of instruction?
- What data do you believe schools should be allowed to collect on students without parental consent?
- What is your position on conducting surveys on students without parental knowledge or consent?

Budget and Operations

- How would you approach the district's budget priorities and fiscal management?
- What is your position on teacher compensation and staff retention?
- How would you evaluate the effectiveness of district programs and spending?
- What role should technology play in education, and how should it be funded?
- Do you believe bonds are a necessary tool for school improvements?

Governance and Transparency

- What is your approach to working with other board members who may have different views?
- What role should community input play in board decisions?

LIGHTNING ROUND: Position Statements (Please indicate YES/NO/No Opinion)

- I believe school district budgets should be transparent and easily accessible to the public. **Yes / No / No Opinion**
- I believe curriculum and policy decisions should be decided by experts in the school district.
Yes / No / No Opinion
- I believe academic achievement should be the primary measure of school success. **Yes / No / No Opinion**
- I support school choice options for parents. **Yes / No / No Opinion**