

Guest Commentary

“Candidate Selection Criteria”

I've been bombarded with “family value” listings showing the position of John McCain and Barack Obama on issues I should be concerned about. Almost always, these lists show opposite responses from the two candidates – if one is Yes, the other is No, and vice-versa. For me, these are only helpful if: the responses are accurate (good source documentation to support it), the topics are what I'm most concerned about, and third – they cover a wide enough spectrum to give an accurate picture of the candidate.

Although many of us have a mental short list of “non-negotiables”, it's instructive to write down what our personal key decision factors are. For the Presidential race, and every other elective office, there'll always be tradeoffs we have to make since its rare for any candidate to fulfill our entire list – particularly if it's a long one. When that happens, I'd encourage voting to prevent the greater harm from occurring instead of refusing to vote entirely because of the “lesser of two evils” syndrome.

So, with those cautions my short list (in roughly priority order) for any elective office follows. Where I believe either Obama or McCain have the edge in coming closer to filling the bill, I list them.

1. **Life**. I'm strongly pro-life from conception to natural death. If a candidate doesn't get this right, why would I want to trust them with any other decisions, since their worldview and values are completely alien to mine (McCain)
2. **Faith**. I'm a Christian, and I would prefer to see sincere, knowledgeable, experienced and talented Christians in office. However, I'm not comfortable with naive Christians trying to figure out on the job how to apply their faith and Biblical principles to the complex problems we face, though there would be hope because of their principles. Those that claim to be Christian, yet deny the fundamentals of the faith or the authority of scripture are not Christian and therefore very suspect. Other faiths, and particularly Atheists are even farther removed from Biblical values (McCain, with concerns)
3. **Family**. I'm strongly pro-family and decry anything that degrades parental authority, supports artificial (same-sex) marriage, mainstreams perversion and immorality (domestic partnerships, homosexual special rights and indoctrination in public schools, pornography, etc.) (McCain, with many questions)
4. **Judges**. Activist judges in our nation have caused more destruction of life and lives than any of our wars because of their godless decisions. The potential need to replace one or more Supreme Court justices makes the Presidential election even more critical (McCain)

5. **Role of Government**. Government at all levels has become too powerful, too thirsty for tax revenue, too intrusive in our lives and the economy, too removed from accountability, too addicted to making people dependent upon entitlements, too ignorant of their proper role, and too much in debt (McCain, with concerns)

6. **Defense**. As a sovereign nation we have the right to defend ourselves, our interests, and our allies. We weaken our ability to do this at our own peril. Our service men and women, as well as their leaders, are due the honor and support they deserve (McCain)

7. **Economy**. Our country is the most prosperous in history, but this prosperity breeds greed and selfishness. Government should punish evil, but not take over the free enterprise system that has served most people very well, and not punish (tax) success (McCain, with many concerns)

8. **Illegal Immigration**. I believe in strong borders, restricted immigration, enforced laws, compassion to visitors, and removal of entitlement benefits to illegals (Neither candidate)

What about the poor, energy, environment, Israel, balanced budgets, public schools, gambling, and on and on? There are endless issues from the local to national levels. That's why it's important to consider carefully what ***your*** short list of "non-negotiables" are, and be as objective as possible about the consequences. Vote for every elective office you can, with a clear conscience, remembering that our responsibility is to support quality candidates, and when they're rare, to vote to prevent the vilest from taking office.

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