

Sample Candidate Questions

NCJW™

National Council of Jewish Women



This document contains sample questions to ask at a candidate forum or on a candidate questionnaire. A candidate forum is a public event where candidates are invited to express their positions on a wide range of issues. It is an excellent opportunity for constituents to learn about candidates, and it provides an avenue to educate voters about the issues National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) cares about and for which your local section advocates. A complete guide to holding a candidate forum is linked on NCJW's Promote the Vote, Protect the Vote webpage.

Reproductive Health, Rights, & Justice

Abortion Rights

- Do you support an individual's right to access abortion, regardless of their income, insurance, sexual orientation, gender identity, immigration status, age, or any other factor? Why or why not? (*federal, state*)
- Do you support the enforcement mechanism — private civil actions — used by Texas to enforce its ban on most abortions after six weeks of pregnancy? (*federal, state, local*)
- Do you support legislation affirming a pregnant person's right to obtain abortion care and a provider's right to deliver that care? Why or why not? (*federal, state*)
- Do you support the Hyde Amendment, which denies coverage of abortion services to those enrolled in federal health programs? Why or why not? (*federal*)
- [If your **state's Medicaid program also bans insurance coverage of abortion**] What is your position on expanding the state's Medicaid program to include coverage of abortion services? (*state, local*)
- Do you believe that young people under 18 should require parental consent to access abortion care? Why or why not? (*federal, state*)
- What is your position on fetal personhood policy, which grants civil or human rights and protections to fetuses? (*federal, state*)
- Recent changes to Title X prohibit providers from discussing or referring patients for abortions. What is your position on these changes? (*federal*)
- Do you support the policy known as the Global Gag Rule, which denies foreign organizations that receive US funds the ability to use their own funding to provide information, referral, or services for legal abortion or to advocate for abortion law reform in their own country? Why or why not? (*federal*)

General Health Care and Coverage

- Do you believe that all individuals should have access to high quality, affordable, nondiscriminatory health coverage? Why or why not? (*federal, state*)
- Do you support the Affordable Care Act's birth control coverage benefit? Do you support its protections for patients against discrimination based on sex, gender identity, or prior health care such as abortion (known as Section 1557)? Why or why not? (*federal, state*)
- Do you believe that states should be able to subsidize insurance policies that do not meet the Affordable Care Act's minimum coverage requirements or protect patients with pre-existing conditions? Why or why not? (*federal, state*)
- [If your **state has not expanded Medicaid**] Do you support expanding Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act? Why or why not? (*state, local*)
- What is your position on block granting Medicaid? (*federal*)
- Do you believe that health care providers, hospital systems, and insurance companies should be able to refuse to provide care or coverage based on religious or moral beliefs? Why or why not? (*federal, state*)
- Do you believe that employers should be able to refuse to provide their employees with insurance that covers birth control services if doing so goes against their religious or moral belief? Why or why not? (*federal, state*)

Federal Courts

- What kinds of nominees do you believe the president should nominate to lifetime seats on the federal bench? (*federal*)
- What characteristics do you think a judicial nominee should hold to be "qualified"? What types of professional experiences should they have? (*federal*)
- Do you believe it is important that federal judges reflect the diverse communities they serve? Why or why not? (*federal*)
- In your opinion, what is the role of the courts in our political system? (*federal, state*)

Voter Engagement

- Do you believe there was widespread fraud in the 2020 election? (*federal, state, local*)
- Do you believe there are discriminatory barriers to voting in your state? If yes, what steps would you take to remove those barriers? (*federal, state, local*)
- Do you support voter registration reforms, such as automatic voter registration or same-day voter registration? Why or why not? (*federal, state*)
- Do you believe that people convicted of a felony should lose their right to vote? If yes, how do you think those rights should be restored, if at all? (*state*)
- Do you support the creation of an independent redistricting commission for your state? Why or why not? (*state*)
- How should local government determine the location and number of voting sites? What about accessibility? Number of residents (to avoid long lines)? (*state, local*)

Civil Rights

- Do you believe white supremacist violence is a problem in the United States? What steps would you take to combat white supremacy? *(federal, state, local)*
- What is your position on capital punishment? *(federal, state)*
- What steps do you think we should take to address police brutality against communities of color? *(federal, state, local)*
- Do you support full equality and protections for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) individuals, couples, and families? Why or why not? *(federal, state, local)*
- How would you ensure that federal laws against discrimination in housing, education, and employment are effectively enforced? *(federal)*
- What do you believe are reasonable solutions to address rising hate crimes and incidents in the US? *(federal, state, local)*
- Do you support increased inclusion in all parts of society for individuals with disabilities? Why or why not? If yes, what policies would you support to achieve this goal? *(federal, state, local)*
- Do you support programs that foster diversity in our nation's colleges and universities? Why or why not? *(federal, state, local)*

Gun Violence Prevention

- Do you support expanding background checks for all gun sales? Why or why not? *(federal)*
- Would you support federal legislation to allow for concealed and/or permitless carry? Why or why not? *(federal)*
- Should the federal government have a role in reducing gun violence? If yes, what is that role? *(federal)*
- Where do you stand on "red flag" laws (laws that allow law enforcement or a family member to temporarily remove a firearm from someone who poses a danger to themselves or others)? *(federal, state)*
- Do you support closing loopholes that allow individuals convicted of stalking and domestic violence misdemeanors to purchase guns? Why or why not? If yes, how? *(federal, state)*
- Are there gun violence prevention measures you do not support? If yes, what are some examples? *(federal, state, local)*
- Do you think that assault weapons and high-capacity magazines should be banned? Why or why not? *(federal, state, local)*

(continued)

Economic Justice

- Do you think that the minimum wage should be increased? What about the tipped minimum wage? If yes, to what rate? If no, why not? *(federal, state, local)*
- Do you think that workers should have access to comprehensive paid family and medical leave? Why or why not? If yes, how long should that leave be? *(federal, state, local)*
- Do you think that workers should have access to paid sick days? Why or why not? *(federal, state, local)*
- On average, women earn 80 cents for each dollar earned by white men. What steps would you take to close the wage gap for women and people of color? *(federal, state, local)*
- Share some ideas of how you would address and prevent workplace harassment and empower workers. *(federal)*
- Child care is a major issue many families face — from access and affordability to training and retaining staff. What ideas do you have to address the child care crisis? *(federal, state)*

Religious Freedom

- Do you think that government-funded programs should be able to discriminate based on sexual orientation, gender identity, sex, or religion? Why or why not? *(federal, state)*
- Under what circumstances do you believe that public taxpayer dollars may be used to fund services provided by religious or religiously affiliated institutions, if any? *(federal, state)*
- What is your position on private school vouchers, including tuition tax credits and education savings accounts? *(federal, state)*
- Do you think that an employer's religious beliefs should impact the health care their employees receive? Why or why not? *(federal, state)*
- Do you believe that religious or moral beliefs should dictate which customers a business serves? Why or why not? *(federal, state, local)*

Human Needs

- What is your position on enacting work requirements for human needs or federal assistance programs, such as Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)? *(federal)*
- Do you support increased funding for human needs programs, such as Medicaid, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)? Why or why not? *(federal)*
- What are your budget priorities? How would they affect women, children, and families in communities across the US/our state? *(federal, state, local)*

- How would you shore up the Unemployment Insurance program? Do you support permanently expanding pandemic Unemployment Insurance? Why or why not? *(federal, state)*
- The Child Tax Credit (CTC), extended during the pandemic, has expired. Would you support making permanent the fully refundable part of the CTC and extend the pandemic-era expansion of the credit? Why or why not? *(federal)*
- We are facing a childcare crisis in this country — with a shortage of staff, low wages for workers, and insufficient affordable options and access for working families — impacting millions of children. How would you address this need? *(federal, state)*

Immigration and Refugees

- Do you support a path to citizenship for people in the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program or those from countries with Temporary Protected Status (TPS)? If yes, what steps would you take to achieve this? *(federal)*
- Does the United States accept too many refugees? Too few? Explain. *(federal, state, local)*
- Do you support policies that provide affordable health care, including access to abortion care, for all immigrants? Why or why not? *(federal, state)*
- Do you think that some immigrants/refugees should get priority to come to the United States based on their religion? What about their country of origin? Education level? *(federal, state)*
- Would you support refugees moving to your state/community? *(state, local)*

Gender-Based and Sexual Violence

- Do you see any gaps for survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking? If so, what are they? What protections would you prioritize? *(federal, state)*
- Does the Department of Education have a role to play in addressing sexual assault on college campuses? If so, what is their role? *(federal)*
- How do you think colleges and universities should handle sexual assault and rape allegations? *(federal, state, local)*
- How will you ensure that all survivors of sexual violence receive the protection and services they need? *(federal, state)*