

Promote the Vote, Protect the Vote

Sample Questions for Candidate Forums and Questionnaires

Candidate forums and questionnaires help voters make informed decisions ahead of Election Day. Forums and questionnaires are opportunities to work with other 501(c)(3) organizations, raise your section's visibility, attract new members and supporters, and keep current members engaged.

A candidate forum is an event that allows candidates to share their views in person on community concerns in a neutral, fair, and open setting. Holding or cosponsoring a forum shows candidates that community members care about the issues and want to be informed voters.

A candidate questionnaire allows all candidates for a particular office to share their positions on the issues in writing. The questionnaires can then be disseminated to voters via websites, bulletins, social media, newspapers, etc. Both candidate forums and questionnaires must cover a broad and unbiased range of issues and cannot reflect the sponsoring organization's views.

It is crucial that candidate forums and questionnaires are in compliance with 501(c)(3) regulations. Your section can organize / cosponsor a forum or questionnaire as long as you:

- Invite / include all candidates who are considered serious contenders;
- Ask a broad range of unbiased questions; and
- Distribute responses or remarks with no editorial comment, and without stating NCJW's views.

See "Q & A On NCJW's 501(C)(3) Status On Election Related Activities" (Resource 1.3) or Alliance for Justice's "The Rules of the Game: A Guide to Election-Related Activities for 501(c)(3) Organizations" (<https://bolderadvocacy.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Rules-of-the-Game.pdf>) for more information.

Below are sample questions you may use for a candidate forum in your community or on a candidate questionnaire. (Questions are organized by issue area). Make sure the questions relate to the office the candidates are seeking.

Reproductive Health, Rights, & Justice

- 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)
- What is your position on block granting Medicaid? (federal)
- Do you support the full implementation of the Affordable Care Act? Why or why not? (federal)
- Do you support an individual's right to access abortion, regardless of their ability to pay or insurance status? Why or why not? (federal, state)
- Do you believe that young people under 18 should require parental consent to access abortion care? Why or why not? (federal, state)
- Do you support comprehensive sexual education, including LGBTQ-specific health information in public schools, K-12? 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)
- What is your position on health care providers and systems refusing to provide care or services based on sincerely held religious or moral beliefs? (federal, state)
- Do you believe that health insurance companies should be able to refuse to provide coverage for transgender-related health care? 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 sincerely held religious or moral belief? Why or why not? (federal, state)
- Do you support funding for all Title X providers including Planned Parenthood? Why or why not? (federal, state)
- Do you believe that all individuals should have access to high quality, affordable, nondiscriminatory health coverage? 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)

Federal Courts

- What kinds of nominees do you believe the president should nominate to lifetime seats on the federal bench? (federal)
- Do you believe that federal judges should reflect the diverse communities they serve? Why or why not? (federal)
- What kinds of nominees do you believe the Senate should confirm to lifetime seats on the federal bench? (federal – Senate only)

Civic Engagement

- Do you support laws that require all voters to produce an official photo ID in order to vote? Why or why not? If yes, what types of IDs do you think should qualify? (federal, state)
- Do you support voter registration reforms, such as automatic voter registration, online voter registration, or same-day voter registration? Why or why not? (federal, state)
- Do you believe that convicted felons should lose their right to cast a ballot? 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)
- Do you believe that it's harder for some communities to register to vote and/or cast a ballot than others? Why or why not? If yes, how would you work to overcome these obstacles? (federal, state, local)

Israel

- Do you support boycotts or divestment targeting Israel? Why or why not? (federal, state, local)
- What do you believe the role of the US should be in achieving peace in the Middle East? (federal)
- Do you support a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict? Why or why not? (federal)

Civil Rights

- What is your position on capital punishment? (federal, state)
- What role should the federal government play in protecting the civil rights of students, if any? (federal, state)
- Do you believe our current criminal justice system disproportionately impacts certain communities? If so, how? What remedies would you put in place to make the criminal justice system more just? (federal, state, local)
- What steps do you think we should take to address police brutality against communities of color and marginalized communities? (federal, state, local)
- What do you believe are reasonable remedies to address rising hate crimes and incidents in the US? (federal, state, local)
- Do you support full equality and protections for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer individuals, couples, and families? Why or why not? (federal, state, local)
- Do you support legislation protecting LGBTQ employees from discrimination at work? Why or why not? (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)

Human Trafficking

- Do you support federal funding for data collection on human trafficking? Why or why not? (federal)
- Do you support federal funding for long-term shelters, job training, and trauma informed victim services? Why or why not? (federal)
- Would you support legislation to protect trafficked minors from prosecution? Why or why not? (state)
- What is your position on efforts to expunge the criminal records of trafficking survivors? (state)
- Do you support legislation to post or promote the National Human Trafficking Hotline? Why or why not? (state)

Gun Violence Prevention

- Do you support funding the Centers for Disease Control to research the causes of firearms violence? Why or Why not? (federal)
- Would you support federal legislation to allow for concealed carry? Why or why not? (federal)
- Should the federal government have a role in reducing gun violence? Why or why not? If yes, what policies would you support to reduce gun violence? (federal, state)
- Do you support universal background checks for gun sales? Why or why not? (federal, state)
- Are there gun violence prevention measures you would not support? If yes, what are some examples? (federal, state)
- Do you support closing loopholes that allow individuals convicted of stalking and domestic violence misdemeanors to purchase guns? Why or why not? (federal, state)
- Do you think that assault weapons, high-capacity magazines, and bump stocks should be banned? Why or why not? (federal, state)

Economic Justice

- Do you think that the minimum wage should be increased? What about the tipped minimum wage? If yes, to what rate? (federal, state)
- What role do you think the government should have in establishing workplace policies like paid sick days, paid family and medical leave, and minimum wage? (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? If yes, how many days? (federal, state, local)?
- Do you believe there is a wage gap between men and women, or between individuals of different race or ethnicities? If yes, do you think national legislation is a way to close that gap? Why or Why not? (federal, state, local)

Religious Freedom and the Separation between Religion and 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 sincerely held religious or moral belief 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 full 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 and how would they impact women and families in communities across the US/our state? (federal, state, local)

Immigration & Refugees

- Do you support a path to citizenship for young immigrants brought to the United States as children, frequently referred to as Dreamers? Why or why not? (federal)
- Do you support comprehensive immigration reform? If elected, what would your priorities be to change our current system? (federal)
- Do you support policies that provide affordable health care, including access to abortion care, for all lawfully present immigrants? Why or why not? (federal, state)
- Do you think that some immigrants or refugees should get priority to come to the United States based on their religion? What about their country of origin? Education level? (federal, state)
- What role should local law enforcement play in enforcing immigration laws? (federal, state, local)
- Does the nation benefit from more immigrants, or from fewer immigrants? Why? (federal, state, local)
- Do you believe that refugee resettlement puts the United States at risk in terms of national security? Why or why not? (federal, state, local)
- Would you support refugees moving to your state/community? (state, local)

Gender Based & Sexual Violence

- Do you support reauthorizing the Violence Against Women Act with expanded protections? (federal)
- What should the Department of Education's role be in addressing sexual assault on college campuses? (federal)
- How will you ensure that all victims of violence receive the protection and services they need? (federal, state)
- How do you think colleges and universities should handle sexual assault and rape allegations? (federal, state, local)