

LDS VOTERS' GUIDE

Produced by Utahns for Liberty!

Although the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints does not endorse specific political parties or candidates, it has provided its members, over time, with rather clear and consistent principles to help them to make their own wise personal judgments regarding both candidates and policies. And this flier presents some of these vital political principles in brief. For a more thorough education about this subject, please study Prophets, Principles and National Survival by Jerreld L. Newquist, among other good sources.

Divine Standards for Political Candidates

The Lord Himself has counseled us that, in choosing our public officers, we should seek diligently for “honest men and wise men” and to uphold “good men and wise men”—“otherwise whatsoever is less than these cometh of evil” (D&C 98:10). Likewise, Hyrum Smith said that “to vote for wicked men, it would be sin” (*History of the Church*, 6:323). As for honesty in particular, Joseph Smith Jr., in his *Views on the Power and Policy of the Government of the United States*, even advised us to “hurl” from office any candidates who break their campaign promises. And Wilford Woodruff taught us that “the laws of Heaven command us not to uphold and sustain men, except they are good men, who will sustain the Constitution” (*Journal of Discourses*, 7:104).

Relatedly, the First Presidency has also advised us to support political candidates “who are truly dedicated to the Constitution in the tradition of our Founding Fathers” (*Deseret News*, 1964 Nov 02). In fact, the Lord has stated very clearly that He “established the Constitution of this land, by the hands of wise men whom [He] raised up unto this very purpose” (D&C 101:80) and, moreover, that it is His will that our Constitution “should be maintained for the rights and protection of all flesh, according to just and holy principles” (D&C 101:77). David O. McKay stated that, “next to being one in worshipping God, there is nothing in this world upon which this Church should be more united than in upholding and defending the Constitution” (*Conference Report*, 1939 Oct). But, as a whole, we have not been following this counsel very well—Ezra Taft Benson warned us that we “have apostatized in various degrees from different Constitutional principles as proclaimed by the inspired founders” (*CR*, 1987 Oct) and, moreover, that, unless we “forsake our sins, political and otherwise, ... we will lose our political liberties, our free institutions, and will stand in jeopardy before God of losing our exaltation” (*CR*, 1976 Apr).

Prophets have taught us not only to uphold the Constitution but also those libertarian principles that inspired its Framers. As John Taylor noted, for example, “beside the preaching of the Gospel, we have another mission, namely, the perpetuation of the free agency of man and the maintenance of liberty, freedom, and the rights of man” (*JD*, 23:63). Also, David O. McKay taught us that “a man may act as his conscience dictates so long as he does not infringe upon the rights of others” (*CR*, 1938 Oct). And Ezra Taft Benson taught us that “the function of government is to protect life, liberty, and property, and anything more or less than this is usurpation and oppression” (*CR*, 1968 Apr). Our Doctrine and Covenants, in its 134th section, also sets forth such principles very clearly.

So, it is the Lord’s will that we should support candidates who demonstrate both personal righteousness and political wisdom, this wisdom being evidenced by their devotion to both our Constitution and its libertarian principles, as understood by its Framers.

False Notions among LDS Voters

Some Latter-day Saints believe in communism or socialism or the welfare state—but prophets have repeatedly condemned these evil practices via dozens of General Conference talks.

Some Latter-day Saints believe in party loyalty. But prophets have advised us to vote based on principle not party. For example, Brigham Young counseled us to “vote for the man who will sustain the principles of civil and religious liberty” regardless of “whether he is a whig, a democrat, a barnburner, a republican, a new light or anything else” (*JD*, 13:149). Likewise, J. Reuben Clark Jr. told us that “our duty transcends party allegiance” (*CR*, 1942 Oct).

Some Latter-day Saints believe that their peers are inherently “good” and/or should be preferred over non-LDS candidates. But J. Reuben Clark Jr. warned us that “ravaging wolves are amongst us, from our own membership” (*CR*, 1949 Apr)—and Ezra Taft Benson repeated this warning, adding that these “wolves amongst our flock” had grown even “more numerous and devious” since it was first given (*CR*, 1969 Apr). Benson also explained that God, to further His work in political matters, has not worked exclusively through those of His Church but also through non-members such as King Cyrus and America’s Founders (*CR*, 1972 Apr).

Some Latter-day Saints believe that our prophets may guide us in spiritual matters but not in temporal ones (such as politics)—but prophets have repeatedly taught us otherwise. Brigham Young, for example, stated that spiritual and temporal things “are inseparably connected” (*JD*, 10:329). And John Taylor asserted that “we need revelations about government” (*JD*, 15:175) and should both know and do God’s will “in politics as in everything else” (*JD*, 11:355).