

# VOTING STANDARDS FOR LATTER-DAY SAINTS

*The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has, since the mid-20th-century, remained neutral as an institution about specific parties and specific platforms and most policies; but it has still encouraged its members to involve themselves freely in politics while it has advocated consistent political principles to guide members in choosing well, including when voting in elections. This document attempts to compile a representative sample of Church pronouncements that pertain specifically to voting standards.*

“Wherefore, honest men and wise men should be sought for diligently, and good men and wise men ye should observe to uphold; otherwise whatsoever is less than these cometh of evil.” – God (*D&C 98:10*)

“We believe that all governments necessarily require civil officers and magistrates to enforce the laws of the same; and that such as will administer the law in equity and justice should be sought for and upheld by the voice of the people if a republic, or the will of the sovereign.” – The Church (*D&C 134:3*)

“We engage in the election the same as in any other principle: you are to vote for good men, and if you do not do this it is a sin: to vote for wicked men, it would be sin. Choose the good and refuse the evil.” – Hyrum Smith (*History of the Church 6:323*)

“I will tell you whom we will vote for: we will vote for the man who will sustain the principles of civil and religious liberty, the man who knows the most and who has the best heart and brain for a statesman; and we do not care a farthing whether he is a whig, a democrat, a barnburner, a republican, a new light or anything else. These are our politics.” – Brigham Young (*Journal of Discourses 13:149*)

“I do not lift my voice against the great and glorious Government guaranteed to every citizen by the Constitution, but against those corrupt administrators who trample the Constitution and just laws under their feet.” – Brigham Young (*Journal of Discourses 5:232-233*)

“The laws of Heaven command us not to uphold and sustain men, except they are good men, who will sustain the Constitution of our country; and we are fulfilling the revelations in this respect as in many others, and we are carrying out the requirements of the Constitution of the United States.” – Wilford Woodruff (*Journal of Discourses 7:104*)

“Now, I am not caring today, for myself, anything at all about a political party tag. So far as I am concerned, I want to know what the man stands for. I want to know if he believes in the Constitution; if he believes in its free institutions; if he believes in its liberties, its freedom. I want to know if he believes in the Bill of Rights. I want to know if he believes in the separation of sovereign power into the three great divisions: the Legislative, the Judicial, the Executive. I want to know if he believes in the mutual independence of these, the one from the other. When I find out these things, then I know who it is who should receive my support, and I care not what his party tag is ...” – J. Reuben Clark Jr. (*Conference Report, 1942 Oct*)

“All through the last political campaign they were saying, ‘Why doesn’t the Church tell us how we should vote?’ If the Church had done that, we would have a lot of Democrats or Republicans who would have wanted to apostatize. ... When they would ask me who to vote for in the coming election, I would tell them to read Mosiah 29 and Section 134 of the Doctrine and Covenants, pray about that, and any Latter-day Saint could know who to vote for in any given election. It is just as simple as that.” – Harold B. Lee (BYU speech, 1961 Apr 19)

“However, above all else, strive to support good and conscientious candidates, of either party, who are aware of the great dangers inherent in Communism, and who are truly dedicated to the Constitution in the tradition of our Founding Fathers. They should also pledge their sincere fealty to our way of liberty—a liberty which aims at the preservation of both personal and property rights. Study the issues, analyze the candidates on these grounds, and then exercise your franchise as free men and women. Never be found guilty of exchanging your birthright for a mess of pottage!” – David O. McKay (*Conference Report*, 1962 Oct)

“And our nation will continue to degenerate unless we read and heed the words of the God of this land, Jesus Christ, and quit building up and upholding the secret combinations which the Book of Mormon tells us proved the downfall of both previous American civilizations.” – Ezra Taft Benson (*Conference Report*, 1975 Apr)

“May I urge you to seek out good, wise, and honest men for public office, and then support them with your vote. You will note the conditions wherein the Lord counseled that we should support men in political office. They ought to be ‘good,’ ‘wise,’ and ‘honest.’ Some men are good and honest, but not wise. These qualities combined provide statesmanship. I’ve said it many times: what we need today are men with a mandate higher than the ballot box!” – Ezra Taft Benson (*New Era*, 1978 Jul)

“Men who are wise, good, and honest, who will uphold the Constitution of the United States in the tradition of the Founding Fathers, must be sought for diligently. This is our hope to restore government to its rightful role.” – Ezra Taft Benson (*Conference Report*, 1979 Oct)

“Note the qualities that the Lord demands in those who are to represent us. They must be good, wise, and honest. Some leaders may be honest and good but unwise in legislation they choose to support. Others may possess wisdom but be dishonest and unvirtuous. We must be concerted in our desires and efforts to see men and women represent us who possess all three of these qualities.” – Ezra Taft Benson (*Conference Report*, 1987 Oct)

“Mike, if you vote for the lesser of two evils you are still voting for evil and you will be judged for it. You should always vote for the best possible candidate, whether they have a chance of winning or not, and then, even if the worst possible candidate wins, the Lord will bless our country more because more people were willing to stand up for what is right.” – Ezra Taft Benson (said to my associate Mike Thompson)

*For more relevant quotations, please search the website [latterdayconservative.org](http://latterdayconservative.org) and/or study the book *Prophets, Principles and National Survival* by Jerreld L. Newquist, which compiles a treasure-trove of Church doctrine about political principles, and which was recommended in 1972 in General Conference to all Latter-day Saints worldwide. And, after you have learned God’s will about politics, please do it!*