

Questions to ask Candidates for State & Local Offices

How can one tell if candidates for state or local office have sufficient understanding of the principles of liberty and Constitutional government to be an effective office holder? In response to this oft asked question, the following questions are suggested:

1. Can you recap the oath of office you will take when you are sworn in upon winning election?

Missouri Constitution, Article 1, Section 15: Every senator or representative elect, before entering upon the duties of his office, shall take and subscribe the following oath or affirmation: "I, _____, do solemnly swear, or affirm, that I will support the Constitution of the United States and of the state of Missouri, and faithfully perform the duties of my office, and that I will not knowingly receive, directly or indirectly, any money or other valuable thing for the performance or nonperformance of any act or duty pertaining to my office, other than the compensation allowed by law." ... any member convicted of having violated his oath or affirmation shall be deemed guilty of perjury, and be forever disqualified from holding any office of trust or profit in this state.

2. Can you enumerate the specific powers of your office?

Unlike federal powers which are specifically enumerated, James Madison said powers in state and local government are "numerous and indefinite. This means they are so many they can't be listed. Consequently, public officials must have a specific set of principles by which they will be guided.

3. George Washington said, "The propitious smiles of heaven can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right which Heaven itself has ordained." What are these rules or what set of principles would you use as guidelines in making decisions?

The Founder's Success Formula is perhaps best outlined in the book *The 5000 Year Leap* by W. Cleon Skousen (available from www.amazon.com). Look for an awareness of the following principles and a willingness to put these principles before politics:

- Inalienable rights are a gift from our Creator, not granted, nor rescindable by governments.
- To be free, the people and their leaders must remain virtuous and morally strong.
- God created all things, therefore upon Him all mankind are equally dependent and accountable in this life and the next.
- Protecting life and the nuclear family is basic to an orderly society.
- Life begins at conception.
- Life and Liberty are secure only if the right to property is secure.
- The people cannot delegate to the government that which is unlawful for they to do themselves.
- Government's proper role is to insure equal opportunity not provide an equal outcome.
- Peace, both individual and national, can only be secured by strength.
- The burden of debt is as destructive to human freedom as subjugation by conquest.
- Charity must be voluntary and local or it will divide the people with entitlement thinking on one hand and resentment on the other. .
- Taxes must be fair to all, simple to calculate, and easy to collect or the people will rebel.
- Democracy is in a state of decline when the people realize they can vote, for themselves, benefits from the public treasury.... (Scottish Historian, Alexander Tytler)
- Powers not expressly delegated to the States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people. (Tenth Amendment)
- Good government cannot be maintained without an educated electorate.

4. What is the proper role of government?

The proper role of government is to protect the inalienable rights of the people not grant rights to the people which only come from God. Government authority comes from the people up and the people can only assign to government what they can legally do themselves. If an individual cannot plunder a citizen for the benefit of another, then his agent, the government, cannot do so either. A good way to measure a proposed law is to ask: "Will this law reduce or remove my neighbor's life, liberty, or property?" If it would, then you can be sure the proposed law is beyond the scope of government.

5. Do you believe that people's morals will affect their ability to enjoy freedom and protect liberty under the Constitution? Will your personal life withstand a high degree of scrutiny by opponents?

John Adam's said, "Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other." This is because free people must practice self-restraint and not need a large expensive police force.

Ben Franklin said, "Only a virtuous people are capable of freedom. As nations become corrupt and vicious, they have more need of masters.

6. What can you do as a public official to get the intrusive federal government out of the personal lives of the people?

A loyal constitutionalist will work to reverse the trends of the last few decades which brought the federal government into the lives of the people. Some specific measures include:

- Refusing to apply for grants or accept federal money for state and local projects.
- Working to repeal the 16th Amendment which allows the federal government to tax the people directly.
- Passing resolutions to deter Congress from imposing heavy regulations on businesses that only pass such costs on to final consumers.
- Using the “bully pulpit” to continually teach correct constitutional principles.
- Working to repeal regulations imposed by government bureaucracies to give more freedom to people.
- Writing legislation that punishes people for harming others rather than creating bureaucratic structures and regulations to prevent anything bad from ever happening.

7. What can you do as a public official to reduce the federal government’s encroachment into the rights reserved to the states?

A loyal constitutionalist will work to reverse the trends of the last few decades which brought the federal government into the lives of the people. Some specific measures include:

- Refusing to allow federal mandates imposed upon the states.
- Working to repeal the 17th Amendment so that states can restore their ability to protect their rights.
- Using the “bully pulpit” to continually teach correct constitutional principles.
- Signing and following a state sovereignty pledge and seeking to nullify federal encroachments on state’s rights.

8. How can you work to solve the problem of poor results in public education?

Work to bring more competition to the education process through vouchers, charter schools, and reducing the power of teacher unions. Work to reduce the power of the federal Dept. of Education and return schools to local control. Pass legislation that rewards parents for greater involvement in their child’s education. Seek to reduce the number of administrators in school offices and increase the number of teachers in the classroom so to reduce the student/teacher ratio.

9. What are your ideas for getting people off of government welfare roles?

- Introduce bills that will improve the economic climate for small businesses in my state so that more and better jobs will become available in the private sector.
- Require the needy to participate in public service or job training in return for relief given and introduce them to “earned achievement.”
- Work to stop federal welfare programs and return the burden of relief to local communities so the truly needy can be discerned and the indolent poor are not rewarded for laziness.
- Limit state relief to disasters and emergencies.

10. What initiatives would you support to reform our tax system so that it would become more simple, transparent, and fair/? Do you support special tax credits to help individual businesses or industries succeed?

Originally, the constitution required taxes to be uniform and prohibited income taxes. Our current tax system has become too, wasteful, complicated, and full of exceptions for special interest groups. We should stop taxing income and move to a flat, progressive, consumption tax instead and seek to repeal the 16th Amendment. No.

11. What ideas do you have for introducing competition and privatization into services, which are currently provided by government or government, sponsored monopolies?

The greatest threat to economic prosperity is the arbitrary intervention of the government into the economic affairs of private business and the buying public. There are only a few areas the government should police:

- Illegal force in the market place compelling the purchase or sale of products.
- Fraud in misrepresenting the quality, location, or ownership of products being sold or bought.
- Monopolies, which eliminate competition and results in restraint of trade.
- Debauchery of cultural standards and moral fiber of society by commercial exploitation of vice – pornography, obscenity, drugs, prostitution, or commercial gambling.

12. When the federal government wishes to acquire land within a state, whose permission does the Constitution require be obtained? Only for what four purposes can it obtain land within any state?

The Constitution spells out that land within a state could be purchased with the consent of the State Legislature. The only four purposes for which the federal government can acquire land are: a). The erection of forts, b) magazines and arsenals, c) dock yards, d) needful federal buildings such as Post Offices. Candidates for office should promise to pursue legal protection from other forms of federal encroachment.