

How Would Jesus Vote:
Contemporary Christian Issues Demonstrated through Voter Guides
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Honors Defense Date: May 8, 2020

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Introduction

Throughout his time in office and during his campaign, the current United States President, Donald Trump, has strongly advocated for the interests of conservative Christians in America. Through his language, as well as his policy positions, it was clear that Trump has endeavored to champion the cause of evangelicals for their political support. Trump proudly tweeted: “The fact is, no President has ever done what I have done for Evangelicals, or religion itself!” His desire to please the conservative Christians paid off during his election, as over 80% of white evangelical Christians voted for him in the 2016 U.S. presidential elections.¹ After Trump won the election, he continued to advocate for the issues of the evangelical community. Notably, he nominated conservative Christian judges to the Supreme Court, including Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh. He has claimed to fight for religious freedom by saying it’s okay to say “Merry Christmas” again by implying that this was not socially acceptable before he came to office. He continued to propagate the narrative that he is defending Christian interests at the National Prayer Breakfast. He said “in America, we don’t punish prayer. We don’t tear down crosses. We don’t ban symbols of faith. We don’t muzzle preachers. We don’t muzzle pastors. In America, we celebrate faith, we cherish religion, we lift our voices in prayer, and we raise our sights to the Glory of God.”² He makes it obvious that his interests align closely with the interests of the evangelical community. Despite being an atypical champion of the Christian community as a twice-divorced man who bragged about his ability to sexually assault women, the two groups have a relationship of reciprocal support. The evangelical Christian community

¹ Martínez, Jessica, and Gregory A. Smith. “How the Faithful Voted: A Preliminary 2016 Analysis.”

² “Remarks by President Trump at the 68th Annual National Prayer Breakfast.”

demonstrated their continued support through a poll in February 2020 where it was observed that white evangelicals believed Trump “helped (59%) rather than hurt (7%)” their interests.³

This essay examines what exactly the interests of the evangelical community are in America and proposes possible explanations for these emphasized issues. Through an examination of political voter guides created by prominent Christian political advocacy organizations in America, this essay relays the central issues among the American conservative Christian community today. Rather than posing a claim and providing evidence to support it, this essay explores Christian voter guides and examines the issues presented. Through this analysis, this essay endeavors to help us understand our culturally divided country and the highly partisan political system that exists today. The issues included in the voter guides are also a reflection of the cultural and political movement of the conservative Christian community that began in the 1980s as a result of cultural change and loss of status that led to an alignment with the Republican party.

Since America’s political system is structured as a representative democracy, voting to elect public officials is a very powerful method for citizens to participate and advocate for their values and interests. Voting isn’t only important for individuals, but for organizations with a vested interest in the values and agendas of elected officials. Organizations such as Planned Parenthood and the National Rifle Association, with missions appealing to certain values such as reproductive and gun rights, are particularly concerned with electing officials that support their mission. These two organizations, among many more, have created voter guides to persuade people to vote for certain political candidates by clearly communicating their positions on relevant issues. These guides are not all identical in the format and information they include, but

³ “Americans’ Views on Trump, Religion and Politics.”

there is a general pattern across them. A prominent feature of voter guides is their endeavor to encourage their readerships to vote. They do this by providing information on how to register to vote, dates when voting takes place, and encouraging the reader to sign up to participate. Now that these voter guides have given the information necessary to vote, they then persuade the reader *how* to vote. Many guides endorse particular candidates who are running for office. They typically provide a scorecard or a rating for each candidate based on previous voting behavior relevant to an organization's cause or to a policy stance they claim to take.

Specific to religious organizations, endorsing candidates can be legally complicated given the benefits and limitations that the U.S. government offers churches. All churches registered as a non-profit 501 (c) 3 receive tax-exempt status. This means they are freed from giving income tax to the government. This benefit was given to churches in 1913 in an attempt to keep government affairs from being entangled with religion.⁴ However, to receive tax-exempt status, limitations are placed on the extent to which churches can then entangle themselves in government affairs. In 1954, the U.S. passed a law that prohibited churches from participating or intervening in “the publishing or distributing of statements, [of] any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office.”⁵ That said, religious organizations are allowed to distribute *non-partisan* voter education materials.⁶ This restriction is seen by church leaders as a real problem because they are not able to advocate for or endorse those political candidates whom they think would represent Christians and advance their interests in society.

In order to advocate for Christian interests, prominent Christian political organizations have created voter guides that claim to be non-partisan since this is the only way tax-exempt

⁴ “Tax Exemptions.”

⁵ “26 U.S. Code § 501. Exemption from tax on corporations, certain trusts, etc”

⁶ “The Restriction of Political Campaign Intervention by Section 501(c)(3) Tax-Exempt Organizations.”

organizations can advertise or distribute these voter guides. These are the voter guides examined in this essay. Although there are a variety of political organizations with voter guides, all of the groups this essay examines include in their mission the spreading of biblical or Christian values in America. The specific types of Christians that promulgate these voter guides primarily include white, Protestant Christians, however, they aspire to reach all types of Christians. The prominent Christian political groups that give people voter guides and information for how they should vote that this essay examines include: Biblical Voter, Christian Coalition of America, iVoterGuide, Vision America and MyFaithVotes. According to the MyFaithVotes Voter Guide, these voter guides are important because, “For Christians, the Bible’s views are the only criteria we can use for selecting leaders.”⁷ In a similar vein, the Biblical Voter Guide claims that it is “A Non-Partisan Review of Six Critical Issues Key to Faith-Based Voters.”⁸ These voter guides are not only used by the organizations previously stated. Many prominent Christian organizations are able to point their followers to these voter guides for information on how they should vote. For instance, the Concerned Women for America, a Christian organization of women, as well as the American Family Association, both with a large following, direct their people to the iVoterGuide for information on voting.

The format of all the Christian voter guides is similar: all state an issue and then explain the candidates’, or major political parties’, position on the issue. Since they give the responses of both sides, all of these voter guides are technically non-partisan. That is to say, the guides do not make explicit what they consider the correct or endorsed way of thinking. And yet we will observe that although they give both sides, I will show in the course of this paper that either the

⁷ See Appendix I.

⁸ See Appendix V.

wording of the guide or the information given make evident that one side is clearly favored.

What is implicit in the guides becomes explicit when one turns to the main websites of the organizations that distribute the guides, where one can clearly see which side of the issue these Christian political organizations advocate for.

This topic of Christian political interests is important as it helps explain a relatively new feature of our political system. Over the past forty years, the Republican Party has come to be associated with advancing the religious interests of Christians in America. The alliance between the Republican Party and Christian organizations is mutually beneficial and allows both bodies to preserve political power. The United States' political system today, specifically post-2016, seems to be much different than what the founders envisioned for the structure of American politics. We are extremely partisan today. Without doubt, one of the factors that contributes to the strict partisan lines between Republicans and Democrats, conservatives and liberals, right-wing and left-wing, involves what the role of religion should be. Noah Feldman notes that the divide in American life “is not primarily over religious belief or affiliation —it is over the role that belief should play in the business of politics and government.”⁹ Today, the Republican party, which is one of two major political vehicles for advancing interests through strategically chosen leaders to carry out the interests within the political system, seems to be a vehicle for the conservative Christian political movement.

After examining the voter guides and materials that lay out the issues most important to their organizations, a pattern emerges as to which issues are important to these groups. The issues mentioned in the voter guides (in order of prominence) include abortion, taxes, healthcare, marriage, Israel, immigration, religious freedom (specifically the kind that allows Christians in

⁹ Feldman, *Divided by God*, 6.

America to exercise their religion without limitation by the government), guns, and the environment. There are unique issues in some voter guides that are not addressed in this essay. I address the most common issues across all voter guides because this essay seeks to understand which issues are the most important to all of these organizations and are then relayed to their followers. This essay will examine each of the issues to gain a greater understanding of why these issues are seen as central to spreading biblical and Christian values in America today. After examining the issues mentioned in the voter guides, the paper asks why evangelical Christians emphasize these political issues over others and ultimately makes the argument that the issues mentioned allow Christians to harness political power through alignment with the Republican Party as well as a push back to the social revolution in America that caused evangelicals to lose their higher status.

Abortion On Demand

All five of the voter guides examined explicitly mention the issue of abortion as an important issue related to biblical values. In fact, this issue, along with the issues of taxes and healthcare, was mentioned by all. The voter guides worded the issue of abortion differently: some use plain language, while others do not. In the Faith and Freedom Coalition voter guide, the issue of abortion is framed provocatively as “Abortion On Demand.” By claiming that a Democratic candidate supports “Abortion On Demand,” the voter guide is analogizing a woman’s legal right to have an abortion to shopping online or renting a movie. In reality, the process of having an abortion comes with government limitations, including the time frame in which an abortion is allowed. Although the organization doesn’t explicitly say which candidate they endorse, the wording of the issue makes their stance perfectly clear.

Another issue mentioned in this one-page voter guide is “Defund Planned Parenthood.” Assuming that the rationale for defunding Planned Parenthood is because of the popular conservative narrative that federal tax dollars goes to funding abortions by Planned Parenthood (despite the fact that Planned Parenthood rejects this assertion), defunding the organization becomes an important political action because it will financially harm, and possibly get rid of, an organization that provides abortions to its patients. By devoting two out of the eight issues to the concept of abortion, the Faith and Freedom Coalition emphasizes the importance of the issue to their audience as well as illuminates its significance to the organization itself.

In the MyFaithVotes voter guide, the issue is labelled plainly as “abortion.” This guide includes quotes from each of the political parties’ 2016 platforms on the issue. The specific choice of quotes, a pattern that many voter guides use, attempts to implicitly show the audience which political party they should support. Democrats, according to the guide, “believe that safe abortion must be...included as part of America’s global health programming.” Republicans stance on abortion, by contrast, is that “all are ‘endowed by their Creator’ with the inalienable right to life... we assert the sanctity of human life and... that the unborn child has a fundamental right to life.” This claims to be non-partisan information; however, by cutting out quotes and bundling these claims together, they make it clear that Republicans incorporate God and advocate for the right to life, while Democrats do not. This cutting of quotations makes the issue of abortion appear clearly distinct along party lines. In reality, these lines are blurred, as neither all Democrats advocate for unlimited access to abortion nor do all Republicans claim there are no instances where abortion is appropriate, for example, in cases of rape and the jeopardized health of the mother.

The Biblical Voter Guide lists “Life and Abortion” as its first issue. This guide summarizes, rather than directly quotes, the platforms for the Democratic and Republican parties. In the guide, Republicans support “Sanctity of Life” and Democrats “will continue to battle Republican efforts to defund Planned Parenthood.” The Republican stance is worded positively, while the Democratic stance conveys opposition. It is worth noting that the terse language used to describe the Republican position, “Sanctity of Life,” is only referring to the issue of the legality of abortion. Although both parties would agree that sanctity of life is important, the disagreement comes from the understanding of when life begins. The correct position one should take is implied from the voter guide based on the language used to convey each party’s position.

Vision America recently published its voter guide for the 2020 Presidential Candidates of Donald Trump and Joe Biden. The first issue is titled “Late Term Abortion” with a subtitle of “Unrestricted, late-term abortions.” It claims that Joe Biden supports unrestricted late-term abortion and Donald Trump does not — a claim I could not substantiate in any research about Biden. “Late Term Abortion” does not actually give information about when that abortion would take place as it is not a medical term, but a political one. By phrasing “late term abortion” as an issue, Vision America is hoping to appeal to the emotion of its reader by having them think about terminating a pregnancy when the fetus is closer to birth. Also, by wording the issue as late term abortion, Vision America is falsely implying to its readers that people can have an abortion as late into the pregnancy as they want. This is not true, unless the life of the mother is at stake or the fetus is not viable. When Vision America claims that the Democratic candidate supports late term abortion, which is not true and purposefully vague, they are clearly violating the non-partisan requirement of voter guides mandated for tax-exempt organizations. Although they

show both sides, there is a clear violation of unbiased, factual information that it is supposed to share.

iVoterGuide identifies “Right to Life” as an issue and then proceeds to outline the two different stances of the political parties. The wording of the issue itself, *right to life*, shows where this organization stands. Although it gives both perspectives of the political parties, this has the effect of favoring the Republican party to demonstrate that they support the “right to life” while Democrats favor the ability to have an abortion.

The Christian Coalition voter guide presents two issues related to abortion: “Public Funding of Abortions” and “Parental Notification of Abortions for Minors.” This voter guide provides another example of funding abortion as a policy issue, but also goes a step further to advocate for legislation that makes it more difficult for minors to receive an abortion. This strategy of placing a burden on a woman’s legal right to have an abortion is legally allowed under the Supreme Court case of *Planned Parenthood v Casey* (1992). In the case, it allowed for states to create laws that require parental consent notification of minors as they believed it did not create an undue burden on the woman.¹⁰ When the Christian Coalition advocates, through its voter guides, parental notification for minors, it is attempting to work within the current legal system in order to create further burdens for a woman to have an abortion.

If it was not obvious, each of these organizations claims a pro-life stance and each of these organizations hopes both to overturn *Roe v Wade* (1973) and defund Planned Parenthood. The organizations deployed a variety of explanations and methods for making evident their stance on the issue. Some simply state their stance with no rationale, some use biblical quotes to provide evidence for their stance, and others portray it as an ethical problem. In a MyFaithVotes

¹⁰ *Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pa. v. Casey* (1992)

video, the pastor claims that Psalm 1:39 proves that abortion is wrong since it says “For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb.”¹¹ Pointing to God’s role in creating life as stated in the Bible, the pastor supports his position that a life should not be ended through abortion. In the end, the presenter concludes that “God is for life so you should vote pro-life.”¹² Just like the voter guides, this video hopes to educate people on the issue of abortion and give them information to decide what policy stance they should vote.

From examining these voter guides, it is clear that the issue of abortion is a central issue to these Christian political organizations. In creating these voter guides and persuading their followers to adopt the values contained within, these organizations are trying to work within the political system to change these aspects of current U.S. policies by encouraging its membership to elect leaders who will advocate for policies that divert federal funding from Planned Parenthood and who will elect pro-life judges who will decide to further limit, or outlaw, the ability for a woman to have an abortion.

Trump’s Tax Cuts

Just like the issue of abortion, issues related to taxes were mentioned in five of the voter guides. The issue of taxes has always been important to citizens as it directly affects how much money is taken out of one’s paycheck and what resources the government is given to fulfill its duty and provide services to citizens. Just like abortion, there is a common policy stance that all of these organizations take: they advocate for lower taxes, and therefore, fewer government-funded services.

¹¹ Psalm 139, NIV

¹² “A Biblical Worldview on Issues.”

In the MyFaithVotes voter guide mentions two issues: “Taxes” and “Budget.” The stance of the Democrats is characterized as being that they want to “stop Republican efforts to hamstring our regulators through budget cuts” and believe that “the wealthiest Americans and largest corporations must pay their fair share of taxes.” Republicans, on the other hand, “consider the establishment of a pro-growth tax code a moral imperative.” The language of the quotation of the Republicans position is framed positively with the inclusion of a moral dimension. The language taken from the Democratic party, which focuses on the language of opposition to budget cuts, rather than conveying what Democrats advocate for spending on government programs, demonstrates a negative position with respect to this party’s stance. This information leads one to assume that the MyFaithVotes aligns with the position of the Republican party.

In the Faith and Freedom Coalition, “Trump Tax Cuts” is the second issue presented. We can guess that this is referring to the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 passed during the first year of Trump’s presidential term, which notably lowered taxes for both businesses and individual citizens.¹³ By framing the issue as “Trump Tax Cuts,” it favors candidates who support rather than oppose tax cuts. It is reasonable that all people want lower taxes and less money deducted from their earnings. The real issue when talking about tax cuts is which government services should be increased and which should be decreased. By framing the issue like this, the guide leaves out an important aspect of the debate on taxes. When the only component of an issue is described as reducing the amount of money taken out of your paycheck, it is obvious what stance a financially logical person would support.

Vision America’s voter guide states “Lower Taxes” as an issue and shows that Donald Trump supports lower taxes while Joe Biden opposes them. In order to show why they want

¹³ “How Did the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act Change Personal Taxes?”

lower taxes, one issue of Vision America’s Guiding Truth, called “Those in Need,” states that “the Bible teaches individual work ethic and self-support for our families when we are able, and the local church is instructed to help those in need instead of excessive reliance on government perpetuating a government dependency entitlement mindset.”¹⁴ This clearly demonstrates a favorable view of self-sufficiency and an expectation that religious groups should help “those in need,” rather than having poor people depend on government-funded welfare services. Another benefit of this self-sufficiency is that Christians would not have to pay for services that they do not approve of through taxes. Giving more of the burden of care to Christian organizations gives them more power and the government less power in deciding who is able to be helped and in what way.

iVoterGuide highlights the economy as an issue for Christians to consider when voting. It explains that “an economic system must allow for individuals to have rights to use those resources without the excessive impediment of government.”¹⁵ They emphasize the fact that “private property and ownership must be respected” and “God has made humans stewards of the resources He has provided (Genesis 1:26-28).”¹⁶ From this quote and the support from a biblical passage, as well as the quotes shown by each political party, the iVoterGuide reflects the belief that less government intrusion and lower taxes are the correct political stance—and one that can be supported by the Bible.

The Christian Coalition’s voter guide highlights two issues related to taxes, including “Make federal income tax cuts permanent” and “Permanent elimination of the ‘death tax.’” The wording of the issues alone makes the policy supported by the Christian Coalition clear. The

¹⁴ “Those in Need.”

¹⁵ “Economic Issues.”

¹⁶ Ibid

organization's website claims that "unsustainable government spending is immoral and will place an incredible burden on our children and grandchildren and limit their access to the American dream."¹⁷ Although it doesn't quote biblical passages for support of this stance, it still claims a moral argument in favor of lower taxes.

From the wording of the issues and the information presented on the websites of the voter guide organizations, it is evident that they believe that the issue of taxes is important to their mission of spreading biblical values. Similar to the issue of abortion, the organizations employ different methods for explaining or persuading others why they take their stance on lower taxes. Some provide no explanation, the Christian Coalition claims a moral justification, and others refer to the Bible to show that private property, apart from government intrusion, is seen as important. As Congress has the power to control the federal budget, it makes sense that the issue of taxes is included in voter guides. If they are able to persuade people to vote for political candidates who believe in lowering taxes, then it is possible these elected officials will advance their interest to lower taxes and reduce government intrusion.

Repealing Obamacare

The issue of healthcare was also mentioned in all five of the voter guides. The issue of healthcare, which is closely related to taxes and abortion, focused on the support or opposition to the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) passed under the Obama Administration in 2010. As with the other two issues previously mentioned, the Christian political organizations mentioned all have a similar policy stance that this act should be repealed.

¹⁷ "Christian Coalition."

In the Faith and Freedom Coalition Voter Guide, the issue is just labeled “Obamacare.” A news article published by this organization states “Faith & Freedom Coalition supports the legislative provisions in the Tax Cuts & Jobs Act that repeal the Obamacare individual mandate.”¹⁸ They support this claim by explaining money will be returned to families once they no longer have to pay for insurance they don’t want.

iVoterGuide highlights “Healthcare” as an issue for Christians. This guide similarly highlights the two different stances of the political parties on the issue of Obamacare. In its explanation of the Christian view on healthcare, it claims that the poor deserve our “consideration and compassion.” However, they proceed to say “We should also be concerned about a welfare system that rewards idleness and poor work habits. In the New Testament, Paul issued this command in 1 Thessalonians 3:10, *‘If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat.’*”¹⁹ Although not explicitly stated, from this severe quote one can assume the organization opposes Obamacare as it gives people healthcare even if they have “idleness and poor work habits.” They use biblical quotes to further support their policy position.

The Christian Coalition frames the issue in terms of “Repealing the Nationalized Health Care System that Forces Citizens to Buy Insurance.” Although the wording of the issue itself is clear as to what side this organization believes is correct, they underscore the point by listing “Repealing Obamacare” first in their Agenda for the 115th Congress. Their explanation is that Obamacare “among many other faults, forces Americans to pay for abortions with their hard-earned tax dollars.”²⁰ The Christian Coalition does not provide biblical evidence for its position on the issue, but it is clear their opposition to abortion is a motivating factor.

¹⁸ “Faith & Freedom Coalition Will Score U.S. House & Senate Vote on Tax Cuts & Jobs Act Conference Report.”

¹⁹ “iVoterGuide.com”

²⁰ “Christian Coalition.”

According to the MyFaithVotes voter guide, Democrats believe “healthcare is a right, not a privilege” while Republicans believe that “healthcare must start with repeal of the dishonestly named Affordable Care Act of 2010: Obamacare.” Although they do not take an explicit stance on who should provide healthcare or how, the reference to repeal and the use of the word “dishonestly” reflects a similar pattern as with the other issues presented in the MyFaithVotes voter guide: they align with the position of the Republican party.

Throughout the guides, the issue of healthcare seems closely tied to both the issue of taxes and the issue of abortion. As described above, many of these organizations want to repeal Obamacare so they have lower taxes and so they are not required to pay for healthcare that provides abortion. By presenting the issue of healthcare in this way, the Christian political organizations are hoping to elect leaders that will repeal the Affordable Care Act—and its “funding” of abortion, which closely aligns with the Republican position.

Defending “Traditional” Marriage

The issue of marriage was brought up in four of the voter guides examined, one time fewer than the previous issues examined. Many of the voter guides framed the issue as “defending traditional marriage,” which means that they opposed the legalization of same-sex marriage that was made federal law in the U.S. Supreme Court decision *Obergefell v Hodges* (2015). The position of these political organizations shared the same view and endorsed the “traditional” marriage, between a man and a woman, rather than marriages between same-sex couples.

In the MyFaithVotes voter guide, Democrats “applaud legalization of same-sex marriage,” while Republicans believe “the cornerstone of the family is natural marriage, the

union of one man and one woman.” The MyFaithVotes website points to the command in Ephesians 5:25, “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,” as evidence for why one should defend traditional marriage.²¹ Once again, MyFaithVotes provides biblical quotes to support its position.

The Biblical Voter Guide similarly echoes the two stances on marriage that MyFaithVotes shared regarding the Democratic and Republican views on the legalization of same-sex marriage. They claim Republicans understand “the foundation of society is the family.” That family is constituted by a “union” between a man and a woman. The Democrats, on the other hand, support the legalization of same-sex marriage.

Vision America titles the issue “Religious Freedom,” but then clarifies in the subtext that this means “Federal law protecting supporters of biblical marriage and gender” (which, the guide makes clear, Donald Trump supports and Joe Biden opposes). This extremely narrow and unusual definition of religious freedom is used to stir an emotional response by asserting that Joe Biden opposes “religious freedom” while Donald Trump supports it. iVoterGuide likewise outlines “Religious Freedom” as an issue, then refers to the parties’ stances on same-sex marriage. Understanding religious freedom as being intricately connected with the gender composition of a married couple in U.S. law is a unique way of interpreting the concept. The use of religious freedom flips the narrative from the idea that certain religions impede someone else’s legal right to marry whom they want to the idea that certain religions are being impeded when the U.S. endorses same-sex marriage.

The Christian Coalition has no issue related to same-sex marriage in its voter guide, but they do present an issue related to sexuality under the heading: “Make Sexual Preference a

²¹ “Family Values and the Sanctity of Marriage.”

Protected Minority Status under Civil Rights Laws.” The Christian Coalition uses dramatic language to describe the Supreme Court case that legalized same-sex marriage: “These five judicial dictators unilaterally legislated from the bench that the 31 state constitutional amendments voted for by tens of millions of American voters — all of which defined in their State Constitutions that marriage is only between one man and one woman — were unconstitutional.”²² One can infer that the policy stance of making sexuality a protected minority status is opposed by the Christian Coalition based on its understanding of sexuality in marriage.

The only way for the legalization of same-sex marriage to be changed is if the Supreme Court takes on another case and overturns its previous decision, or if it at minimum carves out free exercise accommodations for traditional marriage advocates. The emphasis on nominating conservative judges to the Supreme Court by the Republican party and these Christian organizations demonstrates that this issue is important to them. If they elect people who will nominate (President) or confirm (Senators) conservative judges, then they may have a chance at advocating for “traditional marriage” and either overturning the landmark Supreme Court case or enshrining the right to refuse particular services to LGBTQ people.

Protecting the State of Israel

The issue of Israel, typically framed in U.S. military support of the state of Israel, was mentioned in four of the voter guides examined. The state of Israel is religiously significant to the Christian community (as well as the Jewish and Muslim faiths), as it is where Jesus is believed to have lived and died and where prophecies anticipate Jesus’ return. The controversy over Israel, which was declared a Jewish state after World War II, between the Palestinians who

²² “Christian Coalition.”

lived there previously and the Jews who claim it as their homeland, has led to continued conflict. For all of the Christian organizations, the military support of Israel by the U.S. is important in order to fight against people who wish to see its control disappear from the Jewish people. By including the issue of Israel in their voter guides, they hope to elect politicians who will continue to advocate for the security of Israel, either through military support or through a strong allied relationship. There is a variety of possible explanations for why Christians strongly support the security of Israel, including the idea that Israel is a biblical nation and that the state of Israel is opposed by some Islamic countries in the Middle East. I think both of these explanations have some merit. The reason for Christian support of Israel seems to be more of representation of interests rather than direct assault. Israel, which is a Jewish state, is supported by America, a predominantly Christian state. Christians support Israel so that the interests of Jews and Christians living and connected to state of Israel win over the interests of Muslims.

In the MyFaithVotes voter guide, Democrats are depicted as wanting a two-state solution for Israel and Palestine while Republicans reaffirm their commitment to Israel's security. In the Biblical Voter Guide, both the Democrats and Republicans express support for Israel's security. In Vision America's voter guide, Israel is listed as an issue and then specified to mean the "US Embassy in Jerusalem"—which both Joe Biden and Donald Trump support. All three voter guides allude to the fact that both Democrats and Republicans support the security of Israel. In America, support for the security of Israel is not different across party lines. America has made its policy of support for Israel clear since its beginning. Even though the issue is not clearly distinct when voting across party lines, its inclusion in the voter guides can be explained because Christian political organizations hope to preserve its security against international opposition.

Christians hope to keep the security of Israel, despite pushback, not from Democrats but from other countries, particularly in the Middle East.

The Christian Coalition's voter guide states the issue as "the U.S. Should Continue to Support and Stand with the Nation of Israel Against her Enemies." The website of the Christian Coalition clearly outlines its belief that the U.S. should stand with Israel because it is protecting the "peace and security of America's most reliable ally in the Middle-East."²³ It also makes references to Islamic terrorist organizations that the U.S. must protect Israel against.

iVoterGuide claims "National Defense" as one of its issues for Christians, claiming "Ecclesiastes 3:8 reminds us there is a 'time for war, and a time for peace.'"²⁴ In the comparison of each political party's stance on national defense, the position of both parties related to Israel is included as well as their stance on the U.S. military. It is interesting that the security of another country is included in a section that concerns the *national* defense. This strong connection made between the security of Israel and the U.S. shows that many conservative Christians feel their own interests are at stake when Israel's interests are at stake.

Illegal Immigration and Border Security

The issue of immigration and border security is mentioned in four of the voter guides. The Christian political organizations emphasize the need for immigrants, and law enforcement, to strictly follow the current laws in place meant to eliminate illegal immigration and to punish those who engage in it.

In the MyFaithVotes voter guide, Democrats "work to ensure that all Americans – regardless of immigration have access to quality healthcare" while Republicans believe that in

²³ "Christian Coalition."

²⁴ "iVoterGuide.com"

order to “keep our people safe, we must secure our U.S. borders, enforce our immigration laws.” In order to understand what position they advocate for, one only needs to visit the MyFaithVotes website to find a posted video called “What does the Bible say about Border Control and Immigration?” The presenter in the video quotes a passage in Romans 13 to provide evidence that we must respect the laws given to us by our leaders. Romans 13:1-2 states, “Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.”²⁵ As it is noted in the Bible, the presenter commanded his listeners to follow the laws in place, not only because they are laws but because God has given his authority to the those in charge. To provide an example for why we should follow these laws, the narrator points to the refugee crisis in Syria and how that led to “public rapes,” “murder” and a “great rise in crime” in the European Union after it allowed entry to so many people without proper vetting.²⁶

In the Faith and Freedom Coalition, “Sanctuary Cities” are listed as an issue. Sanctuary cities is the term for cities in America that do not fully cooperate with the federal government’s policies on immigration. Large sanctuary cities include Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Chicago.²⁷ By listing the issue of sanctuary cities, this organization is highlighting its view of how immigration should be dealt with. On the website of the Faith and Freedom Coalition, immigration is listed as a prominent issue in which following the rule of law and enforcing strict security at the borders are emphasized. The organization hosted a conference in 2017 at which Donald Trump spoke. In the speech, Trump said that “We’re spreading them out, the drug dealers and criminals from our country, and cracking down on the sanctuary cities that protect

²⁵ Romans 13:1-2, NIV

²⁶ “A Biblical Worldview on Issues.”

²⁷ Lind, “Sanctuary Cities, Explained.”

them.”²⁸ It appears evident that this organization believes sanctuary cities should not be allowed nor supported by elected officials.

Illegal Immigration is listed as an issue in the Vision America’s voter guide. Its website claims that “the government should secure and protect our nation and provide biblical stewardship of its citizenship and national immigration.”²⁹ This would allude to the notion that the influx of illegal immigrants creates an insecure nation. This is commonly associated with the idea that illegal immigrants are likely to participate in other types of criminal activity, since their very presence in the United States is illegal. The quote specifically highlights that citizens and national immigration (which can be inferred to mean legal immigrants) should be provided “biblical stewardship.” Unfortunately, they do not elaborate on what biblical stewardship should look like, but we can assume that this means using biblical principles to manage and advance the interests of American citizens and legal immigrants. Vision America makes it clear they oppose illegal immigration for the security of Americans.

iVoterGuide claims “Border Security” as one of its six issues for Christians and outlines the stance of both political parties. It cites Numbers 15:16 and Deuteronomy 1:16 to provide evidence for the fact that “Aliens in Israel were not given the same status and rights as Jews in the land.”³⁰ The choice of verses, however, is curious. Numbers 15:16 seems to give the opposite message: “You and the foreigner shall be the same before the Lord: The same laws and regulations will apply both to you and to the foreigner residing among you.”³¹ The Deuteronomy passage also seems to support the exact opposite of the idea that aliens were not given equal status to the Israelites: “And I charged your judges at that time, ‘Hear the disputes

²⁸ “Remarks by President Trump at the Faith and Freedom Coalition's Road to Majority Conference.”

²⁹ “iVoterGuide.com”

³⁰ “iVoterGuide.com”

³¹ Numbers 15:15-16, NIV

between your people and judge fairly, whether the case is between two Israelites or between an Israelite and a foreigner residing among you.”³² Either the wording on the website is a mistake or their interpretation of the biblical passages is illogical.

The issue of immigration into the U.S. appears to be an important political issue for these Christian organizations. By including immigration in the voter guides, these Christian political organizations are hoping to elect officials who will reduce illegal immigration in America. It seems that the reason for this emphasis on *legal* immigration is related to protecting the security of the nation against outsiders who do not follow the law. Illegal immigration is an interesting issue to present because no party advocates for supporting illegal immigration. The real problem posed by illegal immigration is what the policy should be regarding consequences for illegal immigrants and enforcement of that policy. It is not that the Christians need to advocate against the concept of illegal immigration itself, they are advocating for stricter policy regarding the enforcement of the illegal immigration.

Religious Freedom

The issue of religious freedom was explicitly raised in three voter guides. The concept of religious freedom has been understood differently for various groups. It has been used to show that religious groups or people should have the right to reject certain things based on their religious understanding of the world (mostly used in reference to values related to same-sex marriage). The concept of religious freedom has also been used to protest the prohibition of churches to endorse political candidates, which is the reason for the non-partisan voter guides in the first place.

³² Deuteronomy 1:16, NIV

In the Biblical Voter Guide, the issue is stated as “Religious Freedom and Repeal of the Johnson Amendment.” The Johnson Amendment is the law that prohibited tax-exempt churches from distributing *partisan* voter guides or endorsing a particular candidate. The wording of the issue makes it clear what one should advocate for, which happens to clearly align with the Republican party over the Democratic party. Republicans call for religious freedom “at all times and the full repeal of the Johnson Amendment.” The Johnson Amendment is the law passed in 1954 that prohibited churches from explicitly endorsing candidates for public office. This means that the Republicans are in favor of churches endorsing political candidates, which would give more political power to Christian leaders. The Biblical Voter Guide incorrectly summarizes the position of the Democrats on religious freedom. The guide claims Democrats will “defend freedom of religious minorities (groups in the Middle East) but no other mention of protections here in the states.” The claim that Democrats only will protect groups in the Middle East, over other American groups, speaks to the fear or opposition of Islam in U.S. politics. This follows what was observed in their rationale for emphasizing support for the state of Israel. In reality, the full quote from the Democratic Party Platform of 2016 states, “We are horrified by ISIS’ genocide and sexual enslavement of Christians and Yezidis and crimes against humanity against Muslims and others in the Middle East. We will do everything we can to protect religious minorities and the fundamental right of freedom of religion.”³³ The inaccurate portrayal of the Democratic political party in this voter guide seems to be an attempt to align with the Republican party, even though the Democratic party also claims to advocate for the religious freedom of all people. Perhaps, the freedom of religion that this organization wants only extends to the protection of Christianity.

³³ “2016 Democratic Party Platform,” 41.

The Christian Coalition voter guide advocates for “Removing Campaign Free Speech Restrictions that are Placed on Some Organizations but not Others.” Although the wording is vague, it seems that the Christian Coalition also sees the Johnson Amendment as problematic for its interests, as the “free speech restrictions” relate to matters of political endorsements on tax-exempt organizations and not others. The issue of not being able to endorse political candidates is framed as an infringement on the religious liberty of these tax-exempt organizations.

As this essay already mentioned, “Religious Freedom” was stated as an issue in Vision America’s voter guide to demonstrate candidates’ position on “federal law protecting supporters of biblical marriage and gender.” This unique understanding of religious freedom is a method to frame the issue not as taking away the freedom of same-sex couples to marry, but as removing or diminishing the freedom of those who oppose same-sex marriage.

The definition of religious freedom is varied across these Christian organizations. The term religious freedom in America is generally thought of as an ideal upon which our country was founded. However, we can observe through these varied depictions that the term of religious freedom is abstract and capable of standing in for a multitude of values and policy positions. By framing various issues using the concept of religious freedom, each guide attempts to gain support and persuade others of the importance of the particular “freedom” for which it is advocating.

The Second Amendment

The issue of uncontrolled gun ownership in America has been controversial and increasingly opposed by the public after mass shootings have occurred in our country, particularly the killing of children while attending school. Three voter guides bring up the issue

of gun control and the Second Amendment as a central issue for their Christian organizations. All three oppose gun control legislation and support the Second Amendment.

The Biblical Voter Guide shares that Republicans have “Full 2nd Amendment support” while Democrats “‘respect’ the rights of ‘responsible’ gun owners but favor increasing legislation to curb gun violence.” Vision America outlines the issue of “Gun Control” and states that Donald Trump opposes it while Joe Biden supports it. The Christian Coalition includes the issue of “further restrictions on the Right to Keep and Bear Arms.” They clearly oppose restrictions on gun owners and claim that “Time and again, liberals attempt to use tragedies to create a perceived ‘crisis’ that requires a new, bigger, government ‘solution.’”³⁴ This is another example of pushback to government intrusion, similar to the rationale given for the issue of lower taxes.

Although the issue of guns was not mentioned in the MyFaithVotes voter guide, their website features a YouTube video called “What does the Bible say about Gun Control?” The question should strike one as unusual as there were no guns during biblical times. The man in the video refers to Luke 22:6, in which Jesus tells his disciples to go buy knives. The YouTube presenter then notes that guns don’t kill people, but rather save people and concludes by saying, “We need to vote for those who are for gun liberty or freedom for the general population.”³⁵ Even though this isn’t listed as an issue, it is clear that gun control is important to the organization and it advocates for “gun liberty.”

It is not clear what the Second Amendment has to do with Christian values. The Christian Coalition does not make this connection for its audience, nor does the information on Vision America’s website. However, this issue has been important to the National Rifle Association

³⁴ “Christian Coalition.”

³⁵ “A Biblical Worldview on Issues.”

(NRA) and the Republican Party. In their party platform, Republicans state that “we oppose ill-conceived laws that would restrict magazine capacity or ban the sale of the most popular and common modern rifle.”³⁶ The Christian organizations’ upholding of the Second Amendment could be explained as reflecting an alignment with Republican political positions rather than as having a foundation in Christian values. It could also be tied to a Christian critique, similar to what we observed related to taxes, that the federal government overreaches its own power by taking away the freedom and independence of American citizens to bear arms.

Energy and Climate Change

Issues relating to the environment were mentioned three times, specifically related to U.S. policy on regulations related to fossil fuels and climate change. Interestingly, the stance that was taken endorsed an independent, economically beneficial method to deal with issues related to the environment.

The Biblical Voter outlines “Climate Change and Use of U.S. Energy Resources” as one of its six critical issues. The Republican candidate’s position was summarized in the following way: “Sees UN efforts as political. Will reject agendas of the Kyoto Protocol and Paris agreement...Supports the enactment of policies to increase domestic energy production in order to reduce vulnerability to foreign influence.” Democrats believe that “climate change is an urgent threat.” In the MyFaithVotes voter guide, Democrats likewise believe “climate change is an urgent threat” while Republicans believe that “states can best promote economic growth while protecting the environment.” For these two organizations, it was difficult to find information that would help one discern which side should be endorsed. However, from all the previous issues

³⁶ “Republican Platform 2016,” 12.

and the clear alignment with Republican party policies, one can probably infer that the pattern remains the same for this issue. One can also understand that the negative references to the “United Nations efforts as political” as well: reducing “vulnerability to foreign influence” is appealing to those who value independence and liberty, similar to what was mentioned with regard to Christian political support of the Second Amendment.

Vision America’s voter guide shows the “New Green Deal” as an issue that Donald Trump opposes and Joe Biden supports. We can assume that this issue is referring to the “Green New Deal” which was legislation proposed by Democratic members of Congress to address climate change. Vision America’s stance on the environment is not clearly elucidated. Its mission statement proclaims that “The earth and the animal life on it are God’s creation and should be stewarded well by man – not worshiped or exploited.” This might lead one to think they are in favor of policies that aid the environment, but a recent blog published on the website claims that “The Bible is clear that God is in control of the world.” The author asserts that “doomsday prophecies have become the favorite of climate scaremongers who routinely declare that the world’s end is at hand.”³⁷ This opposition to climate change scientists and advocates could translate to opposition to the New Green Deal, which was created by this group of “climate scaremongers.”

Although issues related to the environment were not listed on the Christian Coalition’s voter guide, its legislative agenda explains the importance of energy independence in order to “build an independent energy future, a stronger economy and make our nation more secure, as well as fulfill our scriptural obligation to use and take care of God’s creation in a responsible

³⁷ “Will Climate Change Render Us Extinct?”

manner.”³⁸ The Christian Coalition makes it clear that the issue of energy is not an environmental problem, rather it is a matter of national security. Instead of framing energy issues as an environmental problem of God’s creation, it is asserted that a more secure and economically prosperous nation would allow Christians to best “take care of God’s creation.”

Aside from Vision America’s reference to God being in control of the world, the emphasis on energy independence and economically beneficial methods stressed by these Christian organizations was not argued with reference to biblical passages. The issue seems similar to the issue of guns, where the ‘correct’ policy stance has more to do with other political values—in this case, an emphasis on independence from other countries as well as economic prosperity—than with Christian values.

Hypotheses to Explain the Issues Included

Now, after having examined the issues presented in the voter guides, I will consider three possible hypotheses that might explain why these particular issues are so important to conservative Christian political organizations. The question is not only what issues are important to the conservative Christian community, but also why might they choose these issues over the many others that exist in our society. The first possible explanation is that conservative Christians believe the Biblical text advocates for these issues. We see evidence for this through the biblical quotes often used to justify the correct political stance. The second possible explanation that these issues were chosen is that conservative Christians will become more politically powerful by fully aligning their interests with those of the Republican party. Evidence for this is demonstrated through the voter guides’ clear preference for the Republican party and

³⁸ “Christian Coalition.”

their associated candidates; through implicit wording or explicit support, the guides consistently encourage voters to vote for Republicans. The last hypothesis is that the inclusion of these issues in the voter guides reflects a reaction to the progressive cultural change that has taken place in society over the last century. We see evidence for this pushback against the direction of society in the guides' stated support for overturning legislation and court decisions that have taken place in America's recent history. After the analysis of possible explanations for why these issues are important to the conservative Christian community, I will conclude with implications of these highlighted issues on society today and in the future.

Emphasis on the Word of God

The most touted reason for why these Christian political organizations champion their specific issues is that these are concerns about which God Himself has a position on. According to these organizations, the stances one should take on these issues come directly from the word of God. We see this clearly demonstrated through the organizations' mission statements and through the evidence provided for where they stand on certain policy positions. For example, the main page of iVoterGuide claims that it is "Grounded in God. Rooted in Research." On the Million Voices website, which is the voter advocacy group of Vision America, key issues are labeled as "Guiding Truths," demonstrating to its audience that the issues advertised are rooted in a correct theological interpretation. There is a clear attempt to convey to Christians that by adhering to the voter guide recommendations, they are advancing biblical principles in the world.

Biblical quotations are used often to provide evidence for why a certain issue is important and where God stands on that issue. In iVoterGuide, beneath each issue and the political stances of each political party, there is a section called "What the Bible Says." This section either

provides direct quotes or summaries of biblical passages and then analyzes them to advocate for a certain stance. On MyFaithVotes' website, there are numerous videos posted to teach people what the Bible says about certain issues advocated for in their voter guides. These examples from the voter guide organizations demonstrate an attempt to prove that God is on their side and this is the reason they are advocating for the issues that they do.

It is important to highlight that there are many American Christians who understand themselves as following the word of God but do not advocate for these particular issues as central to their understanding of Christianity. Perhaps even more noteworthy, there are many American Christians who take positions opposite to the ones endorsed by the voters' guides and who support those positions biblically. Jim Wallis, a leader of the movement he and others call the Christian Left, understands the word of God quite differently from the Christian political organizations examined here. Wallis states that, "It is faith that leads us to assert the vital religious commitments that fundamentalists often leave out, namely compassion, social justice, peacemaking, humility, tolerance, and even democracy as a religious commitment."³⁹ Wallis highlights that he understands these important issues to come from faith. The framing he uses to establish his political positions is similar to what we have seen used by Christian political organizations on the right: both claim to come to their rather different understandings of political issues through their faith.

An outsider to the conservative Christian community might be led to think that these Christian political organizations are not motivated solely by Christian values when they placed these limited issues on the voter guides. Among those skeptical about the motivations of Christian political organizations, one is likely to find secular Americans on the left and members

³⁹ Wallis, *God's Politics: Why the Right Gets it Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get it*, 67.

of the Christian Left, who may not understand how Christians could come to conclude that these are the most critical issues for Christians or who may not see them as being central concerns of the Bible. Another group of people who could question the Christian values motivating the issues presented on the voter guides would be self-critical evangelicals, meaning those who may agree with the issues presented and the policy stances advocated by the Christian political organizations, but still question the motives of these organizations making the specific issues prominent in Christian politics. One such person is Michael Gerson, an evangelical Christian and former speechwriter for President George W. Bush, who claims that the leaders of the Religious Right such as “Falwell, Graham, and others are providing religious cover for moral squalor.”⁴⁰ Instead of coming to these issues because they are God’s priorities, Gerson contends that many in the Christian right are falsely justifying their actions to control moral issues. He sees the recourse to the Bible as strictly political: using the word of God, the most authoritative text for Christians, is a persuasive way to change the minds of Christian Americans and advocate them to vote a certain way. This essay does not claim that Christians use their faith falsely or in a manipulative way to support a political or moral agenda. I merely bring up this perspective to demonstrate that the debate exists surrounding the motivations of conservative Christians in relation to their political agenda.

The debate is further complicated since the Bible is one of the most complex documents in human history. It not only weighs in on a wide array of issues, but it also provides competing or contradictory takes on a particular issue. The question is worth asking how exactly the prominent issues in the voter guides were chosen from such a vast document of information that highlights so many issues in society. The Bible is a library of books composed by multiple

⁴⁰ Gerson, “The Last Temptation.”

authors over multiple centuries and it often contains passages that could be used to directly oppose the arguments made by these conservative Christian political organizations. For instance, in Matthew 19:24, Jesus is quoted as saying “Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.” This biblical passage was never mentioned when advocating for lower taxes on the rich. Another example of a clear message from Jesus that was left out of the Christian political organizations was his perspective on divorce: “Whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery” (Matthew 5:32). Although the sin of committing adultery is listed in the Ten Commandments, this issue is never mentioned in the voter guides’ discussions of marriage. I raise these examples—two among many—to illuminate the subjective nature of the ‘correct’ policy stance on the issues mentioned by voter guides. Even those that are explicit in their invocation of the word of God are selective about *which* words of God to invoke.

To offer a more sustained example: the biblical position on abortion is also not as one-sided as the Christian political organizations advertise. Numbers 5:20-21 tells us that if a woman has committed adultery and becomes pregnant, a priest punishes her by cursing her to have a miscarriage. The priest declares “may the Lord cause you to become a curse among your people when he makes your womb miscarry and your abdomen swell.”⁴¹ This biblical passage that incites God’s participation in a termination of pregnancy is never mentioned in any of the guides’ discussions of abortion. Neither is Exodus 21 mentioned, in which a fetus is implied to be property rather than person: “If people are fighting and hit a pregnant woman and she gives birth prematurely [or has a miscarriage] but there is no serious injury, the offender must be fined whatever the woman’s husband demands and the court allows. But if there is serious injury, you

⁴¹ Numbers 5:21, NIV

are to take life for life.”⁴² The serious injury in question is referencing the mother. The death of the fetus only results in a fine, implying that it is property, not rights-bearing life. I highlight these biblical passages related to abortion to show that there is not one clear stance that the Bible takes related to abortion, despite what Christian political organizations claim.

The very nature of the Bible may provide another reason that the guides focus on the issues that they do. Every act of reading is an act of interpretation, but the Bible often seems to require more interpretation than other texts. Given the wide variety of topics the Bible covers (often in an unsystematic or unsustained way) and the complexity of importing some of these ancient laws into a contemporary framework, the contemporary reader of the Bible will often have to do the work of deciphering what God really meant, deciding how we should apply those principles today, and determining what should be included and left out in one’s following of biblical law. Michael Gerson reminds us that “The Christian Bible, after all, can be a vexing document: At various points, it offers approving accounts of genocide and recommends the stoning of insubordinate children.”⁴³ While Christian doctrine divides the laws of the “Old Testament” into different categories (civil, ceremonial, and moral), individual Christian readers are often selective about what they take from the Bible and what they don’t. Even as they uphold the whole Bible as the word of God, most Christians do not follow, nor even attempt to follow every line of the Bible. An examination of the voter guides of today gives us a fairly clear picture of what Christian political organizations found to be important in the Bible and what they decided to leave out. On closer look, the fact these issues are in the Bible alone does not adequately explain why the Christian organizations highlight the issues that they do.

⁴² Exodus 21, NIV

⁴³ Gerson, “The Last Temptation.”

Political Alignment and Power

Another way that one could understand the significance placed on these issues is through political alignment and power by grouping conservative Christians with the Republican party to create a stronger electorate and enhance the political power of both groups. Michael Gerson argues that many evangelicals follow “the contours of the political movement that is currently defending, and exploiting, them. The voter guides of religious conservatives have often been suspiciously similar to the political priorities of movement conservatism.”⁴⁴ Gerson explains the clear political alignment with the Republican party in Christian voter guides is motivated by a desire to support its defenders (Republicans) and defend against its exploiters (Democrats). We see evidence of this political alignment clearly in the voter guides. Voter guides themselves are political tools, created by Christians, to influence their followers to vote a certain way. It was evident within the voter guides that the Republican side of an issue, either implicitly or explicitly, happened to match exactly what the Christian political organizations were advocating for.

This strong allegiance between Republicans and conservative Christians was not always present. The Moral Majority, founded by Jerry Falwell in 1979, advocated for socially conservative issues in response to what he saw as the moral deterioration of America evident in issues including the legalization of abortion, gay rights, and the civil rights movement.⁴⁵ The founding of this group marked the first time conservative Christians advocated strongly and collectively for issues in the political system. The coalition of Christians acting collaboratively in the political sphere was seen as a success as it helped elect Ronald Reagan in 1980. The election

⁴⁴ Ibid

⁴⁵ The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. “Moral Majority.”

of Reagan represented the moment where evangelicals became actively involved in Republican politics. Reagan was able to receive two-thirds of the evangelical white vote.⁴⁶

Historians of American Christianity note that evangelical Christianity and the Republican Party developed a symbiotic relationship with each other. When Republicans advance Christian interests, they will gain power and have a higher chance of being voted into office. At the National Association of Evangelicals in 1980 during his presidential campaign, Ronald Reagan, said, “I know that you can’t endorse me but I only brought that up because I want you to know that I endorse you.”⁴⁷ Three years later, well into his presidency, his speech at the same conference largely centered around destroying the evils of abortion and the Soviet Union. He brought up the role of his Christian supporters in helping to keep working at the issues he previously outlined: “And yes, we need your help to keep us ever-mindful of the ideas and the principles that brought us into the public arena in the first place.”⁴⁸ Through his language of ‘we’ and ‘us,’ Reagan is creating the sentiment of connection and mutual reliance for each group as they have common goals and interests, that are dependent on each other for success.

In more recent Republican rhetoric, the connection between Christians and Republicans is evident. In the 2016 Republican Party Platform, the word “God” is mentioned fifteen times. The Preamble to the Platform states, “Every time we sing, ‘God Bless America,’ we are asking for help. We ask for divine help so our country can fulfill its promise.”⁴⁹ The platform authors are making clear where they stand related to God’s role in America, front and center. The frequent mentions of God can be understood as direct appeals to Christian voters, who provide the majority of their support. If you were to look at the demographics of the 2016 presidential

⁴⁶ Haberman, “Religion and Right-Wing Politics: How Evangelicals Reshaped Elections.”

⁴⁷ Lamb, “35th Anniversary of Reagan’s ‘I Know You Can’t Endorse Me. But I Endorse You.’”

⁴⁸ Reagan, “Evil Empire.”

⁴⁹ “Republican Platform 2016,” Preamble.

election between the Republican party candidate and the Democratic party candidate, conservative Christians overwhelmingly voted for the Republican, Donald Trump. This mutual relationship between the two groups resulted in a successful 2016 presidential campaign for both.

There are Christians who see this political party alignment as problematic. Jim Wallis pithily notes that “Of course, God is not partisan; God is not a Republican or a Democrat.”⁵⁰ Despite the fact that there were no Republicans or Democrats during biblical times, the contemporary political alignment of conservative Christians with the Republican party has made this reminder of God’s nonpartisan identity more necessary. The conflation between Republicans and “God’s Party” becomes more pronounced when one party includes God in its party language while the other, the Democrats, barely make reference to it. In the 2016 Democratic Party Platform, God was only mentioned three times.

Not only does God’s political allegiance to one party over another seem absurd to Wallis, but the issues for which the Republican party and conservative Christians have aligned are also problematic. The consequences of this alignment result in Christian leaders no longer advocating for Christian values, rather just advocating for issues that will keep them in power. Michael Gerson argues that “In this Christian political movement,” referencing the political effort to elect Donald Trump for president, “Christian theology is emphatically not the primary motivating factor.”⁵¹ Wallis contributes to this discussion through his observation that “direct mail strategy and fundraising came to dominate the Religious Right’s political agenda over its previous moral concerns.”⁵² Rather than focusing on Christian issues, Wallis claims, the Christian political organizations became focused on political issues. We see that in the issues brought up such as

⁵⁰ Wallis, *God's Politics: Why the Right Gets it Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get It*, 63.

⁵¹ Gerson, “The Last Temptation.”

⁵² Wallis, *God's Politics: Why the Right Gets it Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get It*, 63.

lower taxes and gun control with very few, or far-fetched, biblical references to prove that God was on their side.

Michael Gerson claims that negative consequences occurred when evangelical Christians aligned with the Republican party. He argues, after the election of Donald Trump, that, “for a package of political benefits, these evangelical leaders have associated the Christian faith with racism and nativism. They have associated the Christian faith with misogyny and the mocking of the disabled. They have associated the Christian faith with lawlessness, corruption, and routine deception.”⁵³ This political alignment is a tradeoff of benefits. As conservative Christians attempt to elect people to power who will advocate for their issues, in return, the Christian masses must support such candidates despite the downsides, despite the non-Christian values, of the person to whom they throw their support. This hypothesis of political alignment can explain what we observe in the contemporary voter guides, in election demographics, and in political rhetoric. Timothy Dalrymple, the president of the Christian publication *Christianity Today*, agreed that the alignment with Trump has degraded the legitimacy of Christianity in the eyes of many people. Dalrymple stated poignantly: “While the Trump administration may be well regarded in some countries, in many more the perception of wholesale evangelical support for the administration has made toxic the reputation of the Bride of Christ.”⁵⁴ Although this deterioration of legitimacy to the evangelical community is debated, it does exist today.

Pushback Against Cultural Change

Another way to explain the Christian alignment with the Republican party and their rising to the political arena to advocate for their issues, is to incorporate historical context. Among

⁵³ Gerson, “The Last Temptation.”

⁵⁴ Dalrymple, “The Flag in the Whirlwind: An Update from CT's President.”

certain Christians (and many Trump supporters), there is a widespread narrative that the nation is in moral decline. The broad contours of this narrative go like this: in early America, Christians thrived in a society that tolerated religious freedom and established a legal system that protected their interests. Over time, the status of Christians changed. Michael Gerson points to the increase of biblical criticism, the theory of evolution, industrialization, and immigration as causes that contributed to a fundamentalist movement espousing a return to foundational and conservative values. Those tendencies crystalized in 1925, a pivotal moment in the eyes of Christians in America. That year, a court case colloquially known as the Scopes Monkey Trial deemed the teaching of evolution illegal in Tennessee. Despite the fact that the teacher of evolution, who broke Tennessee law, lost the case, the case was a catalyst for the nation. Those who opposed evolution lost the respect of broader American society. Michael Gerson claims that “activism and optimism were replaced by the festering resentment of status lost.”⁵⁵ As a result, fundamentalists created their own subculture of conservative talk shows and religious schools to create a community of like-minded people.

Not only did some conservative Christians not readily adapt to new scientific understanding and secularization, but the culture around them also kept changing. As a whole, the last fifty years has marked an increasingly tolerant culture regarding “socially liberal” values. This has been perpetuated by increasing secularity among people and universities, marked by a decrease in church attendance and a decrease in theological teaching, and the portrayal of acceptance of socially liberal views in the media. The courts in America also judged cases in a way that went against the values of conservative Christians. In 1963, the Supreme Court decided

⁵⁵ Gerson, “The Last Temptation.”

that prayer in public schools was unconstitutional.⁵⁶ In 1973, the women's liberation movement led to the passing of *Roe v Wade*.⁵⁷ It seemed as if conservative Christianity in America was not winning in the courts or the minds of most Americans. The issues mentioned in the voter guides seem to be reactive to these great political and social shifts.

The resurgence in conservative Christian power in the 1980s, according to Michael Gerson, was not due to an increase in adherents, but to the outlasting of other religions. While evangelical church membership had held steady, liberal Christian church membership had markedly declined. "As its old theological rival faded—or, more accurately, collapsed—evangelical endurance felt a lot like momentum,"⁵⁸ notes Gerson. With the seemingly powerful conservative Christian movement enduring, its influence took off after it became involved in politics.

The overwhelming support of Donald Trump by conservative Christians can also be explained by examining Trump's language around cultural change. Most notably, his 2016 campaign slogan was "Make America Great Again" which references a desire for cultural change in America by returning American society to a time in history. It is not clear what specific time in history the Trump administration thought America was great. For conservative Christians, this reference to a lost time—one where America was formerly great—can signal a recognition of and a desire to return to a time in America where conservative Christians were respected and admired, rather than outcast by elites in the media, academia, and politics. In a book-length chronicle of her experience in the "Red States," Angela Denker describes an encounter with a preacher who shared his feelings about the current culture he perceives the

⁵⁶ *Abington v Schempp* (1963)

⁵⁷ *Roe v Wade* (1973)

⁵⁸ Gerson, "The Last Temptation."

nation to be in: “We are on the brink of a third world war. Half our country categorically has said no to God. Raise your hand if you were born after 1962. I feel sorry for you, the country I grew up in doesn’t exist anymore. In 1962, we threw prayer out of public schools. In 1973, we legalized murder of the unborn.”⁵⁹ The time before 1962 is seen as better for Christians compared to the time we live in now. By claiming we are on the brink of war, the preacher ignites a feeling of fear and resentment towards the elite groups in society who advocated and benefitted from the political and cultural shift that occurred. This is an example of the perceived and extreme cultural divide in America.

Thus, one could conclude that these Christian political organizations feel the need to create voter guides and advocate for their issues because they feel threatened. Michael Gerson sums up this position: “In a remarkably free country, many evangelicals view their rights as fragile, their institutions as threatened, and their dignity as assailed. The single largest religious demographic in the United States—representing about half the Republican political coalition—sees itself as a besieged and disrespected minority.”⁶⁰ Despite the overwhelming numbers of conservative Christians, the fear of cultural change and liberal superiority can explain why they advocate for issues that push back against our American politically and socially accepted ideas, including abortion, same-sex marriage, and even Obamacare.

Conclusion

Based on the issues presented in the voter guides and the three hypotheses mentioned, I argue that as a result of cultural change and loss of status, the conservative Christian community

⁵⁹ Denker, *Red State Christians: Understanding the Voters Who Elected Donald Trump*, 29.

⁶⁰ Gerson, “The Last Temptation.”

began to align themselves with the Republican party in the 1980s in order to gain political power and push back against the direction in which the country was headed. Gerson, an evangelical himself, sums it up as “the story of how an influential and culturally confident religious movement became a marginalized and anxious minority seeking political protection under the wing of a man such as Trump.”⁶¹ This can explain the reason for why the issues highlighted in the Christian political organizations’ voter guides are strategically used to advocate for the resurgence of a prominent, powerful conservative Christian community.

This is not to say that the issues presented in the voter guides are not important to the values of the conservative Christian community. If this community devotes time and effort to advocating for certain issues, it follows logically that they personally care about the issues. However, the emphasis of these issues over other issues as a collective Christian cause can be explained by the desire among these churches and organizations to gain political support and push back against societal change. It should also not be left unsaid that there are many other conservative Christian organizations that do spend significant time devoted to fighting other issues such as caring for the poor and needy. However, unlike the organizations that publish the voter guides we have examined, these organizations do not have the same widespread support to create a political movement. For one, they are not fighting against controversial issues, so they have no opponent to outdo by organizing marches and making their voices heard to demonstrate their position.

The issues raised by the voter guides reflect how complicated religion is as a whole. Even within a community of Christians, there are vastly different understandings of what the Bible says and what their personal faith deems important. In her consideration of Christian

⁶¹ Ibid

dominionists, Michele Goldberg writes, “ideologies are never monolithic— people take what speaks to them and overlook what doesn’t.”⁶² This point is very evident when we see which issues the political organizations highlight and which issues they do not. Americans have long adapted their beliefs to fit their idea of what kind of a world they want to live in. For example, slaveholders, as well as abolitionists in America, pointed to the Bible to justify the position that they wanted to be legalized related to slavery. Conservative Christians in America seem to have adapted their beliefs, just like liberal Christians, to advocate for the kind of world they want to live in.

From examining the voter guides and analyzing possible reasons for why we see these issues as central to the conservative Christian organizations chosen, it is evident that the history and context in which these issues and groups evolved had an important impact on creating the issues that we observe now. This brief historical examination illuminates that there are complicated reasons that these issues are at the forefront of the Christian political discussion. These voter guides also demonstrate the fact that groups with ample support and prominent voices in society are able to gain power in advancing the interests that they want — as is the story with Trump and the evangelical community. It is possible that by learning about why these issues matter to conservative Christians, we can attempt to find common ground on caring about people in need and lessen the cultural pushback the groups feel from elites and liberals in order to end the strong cultural and political divide in America demonstrated through these voter guides.

⁶² Goldberg, *Kingdom Coming: The Rise of Christian Nationalism*, 9.

Appendix

I.

Party Platforms Summary¹

Produced in partnership with PublicAwarenessMinistries.com and available at MYFAITHVOTES.org

For Christians, the Bible's views are the only criteria we can use for selecting leaders...

ISSUES	Democrat	Green	Libertarian	Republican
Abortion & Public Funding of Abortion	"... every woman should have access to... safe and legal abortion—regardless of where she lives, how much money she makes... believe that safe abortion must be... included as part of America's global health programming."	"It is essential that the option of a safe, legal abortion remains available... regardless of age or marital status."	"... government should be kept out of the matter, leaving the question to each person for their conscientious consideration."	"'all' are 'endowed by their Creator' with the inalienable right to life... we assert the sanctity of human life and... that the unborn child has a fundamental right to life which cannot be infringed. We support a human life amendment to the Constitution..."
Definition of Marriage	"Democrats applaud last year's decision by the Supreme Court that recognized that LGBT people... have the right to marry the person they love."	"We call for... ending governmental use of the doctrines of specific religions to define... marriage... between consenting adults."	"Consenting adults should be free to choose their own sexual practices and personal relationships."	"the cornerstone of the family is natural marriage, the union of one man and one woman"
Israel / Foreign Policy	"We will continue to work toward a two-state solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict... that guarantees Israel's future as a secure... democratic Jewish state"	"... support popular movements for peace and demilitarization in Israel-Palestine..."	<i>No comment on Israel.</i> "Our foreign policy should emphasize defense against attack... end... military and economic aid."	"We reaffirm America's commitment to Israel's security and will ensure that Israel maintains a qualitative military edge over any and all adversaries."
Health Care	"Democrats believe that health care is a right, not a privilege...we took a critically important step toward the goal of universal health care by passing the Affordable Care Act [Obamacare]."	"Green Party supports single-payer universal health care and preventive care for all. We believe that health care is a right, not a privilege."	We favor a free-market health care system... freedom of individuals to determine the level of health insurance they want... including end-of-life decisions"	"Any honest agenda for improving healthcare must start with repeal of the dishonestly named Affordable Care Act of 2010: Obamacare."
Budget	"We will stop Republican efforts to hamstring our regulators through budget cuts... We must end waste in the defense budget..."	"The United States government must reduce our defense budget to half of its current size."	"We support the passage of a 'Balanced Budget Amendment' to the US Constitution...by cutting expenditures"	"The Republican path to fiscal sanity and economic expansion begins with a constitutional requirement for a federal balanced budget."
Immigration / Borders	<i>No comment on securing US borders...</i> "We continue to fight for comprehensive immigration reform...will work to ensure that all Americans—regardless of immigration status—have access to quality health care."	"Green Party stands firmly for social justice for all those living in this country regardless of their immigration status...immediate dismantling of the border wall."	"Economic freedom demands the unrestricted movement... across national borders. However, we support control over the entry into our country of foreign nationals who pose a...threat"	"To keep our people safe, we must secure our [US] borders, enforce our immigration laws, and properly screen refugees and other immigrants entering from any country..."
Taxes	"The wealthiest Americans and largest corporations must pay their fair share of taxes... We will then use the revenue raised from fixing the corporate tax code to reinvest in rebuilding America."	"Simplify the tax code. Make it... resistant to the machinations of powerful corporate and wealthy interests."	"We call for the repeal of the income tax, the abolishment of the IRS and all federal programs... not required under the U.S. Constitution."	"Republicans consider the establishment of a pro-growth tax code a moral imperative... Getting our tax system right will be the most important factor in driving the entire economy back to prosperity."
Environment	"Climate change is an urgent threat and a defining challenge of our time...pursuing a global economic agenda that promotes rising wages and invests in quality public services, workers' rights, and environmental protections."	"Support, enforce and strengthen the National Environmental Policy Act."	"Protecting the environment requires a clear definition and enforcement of... responsibilities regarding... land, water, air"	"We believe states can best promote economic growth while protecting the environment...environmental problems are best solved by giving incentives for human ingenuity and the development of new technologies."
Source of Quotes:	democrats.org/where-we-stand/party-platform	gp.org/platform	lp.org/platform	gop.com/platform

¹This *non-partisan* information is based on the 2016 National Platforms for these major political parties. **You are encouraged to do independent research.**

II.

★ 2018 CHRISTIAN COALITION ★

VOTER  GUIDE



Peter Roskam (R)

Illinois
US Congress
District 6 Election



Sean Casten (D)

ISSUES

Yes	Make federal income tax cuts permanent	No
Yes	Permanent Elimination of the "Death Tax"	Unknown
Yes	Passage of a Balanced Budget Amendment to the U.S. Constitution	No
No	Further Restrictions on the Right to Keep and Bear Arms	Yes
No	Public Funding of Abortions (Such as Govt Health Benefits and Planned Parenthood)	Yes
Yes	Parental Notification for Abortions by Minors	No
Yes	Repealing the Nationalized Health Care System that Forces Citizens to Buy Insurance	No
Yes	The US Should Continue to Support and Stand with the Nation of Israel Against her Enemies	Unknown
No	Make Sexual Preference a Protected Minority Status under Civil Rights Laws	Yes
Yes	Removing Campaign Free Speech Restrictions that are Placed on Some Organizations but not Others	Unknown
Yes	Education Vouchers that Allow Parents to Choose a Public or Private School for their Children	No
Yes	Take federal action to secure the grid against foreign terrorist interference	Unknown
Unknown	Eliminate barriers to housing and employment for those who have successfully completed their jail sentence	Unknown

roskamforcongress.com

castenforcongress.com

Each candidate was sent a 14 Issue Survey by mail and/or Acoustic (Fax) machine. When possible, positions of candidates on issues were verified or determined using voting records and/or public statements (an "X" in circles such materials were used). Paid for and authorized by the Christian Coalition, P.O. Box 31424 - Washington, DC 20013. The Christian Coalition is a pro-family, citizen action organization. This voter guide is provided for educational purposes only and is not to be construed as an endorsement of any candidate or party.

★ Vote on November 6th! ★

★ Vote on November 6th! ★

Dear friend,

You are holding one of the most powerful tools Christians have ever had to impact our society during elections – the Christian Coalition voter guide. This simple tool has helped educate tens of millions of citizens across this nation as to where candidates for public office stand on key faith and family issues.

I want to assure you that your church or civic group has every right to distribute these non-partisan voter guides, and distributing them poses no threat whatsoever to any organization's tax-exempt status. In fact, Christian Coalition is the only organization whose voter guides are prepared in accordance with IRS approved guidelines for distribution in churches.

I encourage you to help spread this important information to others by making additional copies for distribution. You can make voter guides available in every way possible – in churches, at Christian bookstores, as neighborhood handouts and even outside your local polling station. You can also visit our website at www.cc.org/voterguides to find links to this guide which you can forward to others via email, as well as Facebook and Twitter.

Also, please be in prayer for our nation, as we continually need God's hand of mercy and protection.

This is a crucial election and too much is at stake for God's people to sit on the sidelines. Be sure to make your vote count by going to the polls this coming Election Day!

Thank you for the stand you are taking as a Christian citizen and may God bless America!

Sincerely,
Roberta Combs
President, Christian Coalition

★ www.cc.org/voterguides ★

III.

VOTER GUIDE



BILL NELSON
(DEMOCRAT)



FAITH & FREEDOM COALITION

FLORIDA

U.S. SENATE



RICK SCOTT
(REPUBLICAN)

YES ¹	Abortion On Demand	NO ⁷
NO ²	Trump Tax Cuts	YES ⁸
NO ³	Defund Planned Parenthood	YES ⁹
YES ³	Obamacare	NO ¹⁰
YES ⁴	Sanctuary Cities	NO ¹¹
NO ⁵	Neil Gorsuch Confirmation	YES ¹²
NO ²	\$2,000 Child Tax Credit	YES ⁸
YES ⁶	Iran Nuclear Deal	NO ⁶

1. miamiherald.com (Jul 2, 2018). 2. HR 1 senate.gov. 3. S. Amdt. 667 to HR 1628 senate.gov. 4. S.Amdt. 1948 to S.Amdt. 1969 to H.R. 2579 senate.gov. 5. Roll Call 111. 115th Congress senate.gov. 6. Tampa Bay Times May 8, 2018. 7. orlandosentinel.com (Mar 25, 2016). 8. tampabay.com (Dec 19, 2017). 9. news.wjct.org (Apr 4, 2016). 10. orlandosentinel.com (Jul 18, 2017). 11. wfla.com (Sep 2, 2017). 12. Press Release flgov.com (Apr 7, 2017).

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IV.

2020 PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY VOTER GUIDE			
 VISION AMERICA™ VISIONAMERICA.ORG	REP  DONALD TRUMP	DEM  JOE BIDEN	
LATE TERM ABORTION Unrestricted, late-term abortions	O OPPOSES ¹	S SUPPORTS ¹³	
RELIGIOUS FREEDOM Federal law protecting supporters of biblical marriage and gender	S SUPPORTS ²	O OPPOSES ¹⁴	
GUN CONTROL Increased gun control regulations	O OPPOSES ³	S SUPPORTS ¹⁵	
SUPREME COURT JUSTICES Appointments of justices who interpret the Constitution by adhering to the framers' original intent and text	S SUPPORTS ⁴	O OPPOSES ¹⁶	
PRISON REFORM First Step Act provisions for non-violent offense inmates	S SUPPORTS ⁵	U UNKNOWN ¹⁷	
PARENTAL CHOICE IN EDUCATION Parental choice for educational opportunities including charter schools and/or vouchers	S SUPPORTS ⁶	O OPPOSES ¹⁸	
ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION Decriminalizing illegal immigration	O OPPOSES ⁷	O OPPOSES ¹⁹	
LOWER TAXES The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA)	S SUPPORTS ⁸	O OPPOSES ²⁰	
ISRAEL U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem	S SUPPORTS ⁹	S SUPPORTS ²¹	
NEW GREEN DEAL Comprehensive climate change regulations	O OPPOSES ¹⁰	S SUPPORTS ²²	
INTEGRATION AND SPORTS Legislating male athletes into girls' sports	O OPPOSES ¹¹	S SUPPORTS ²³	
PLANNED PARENTHOOD Federal funding of Planned Parenthood and other abortion providers	O SUPPORTS ¹²	S OPPOSES ²⁴	

V.

			
COMPARISON OF MAJOR PARTY PLATFORM 2016-2020 POSITIONS			
A Non-Partisan Review of Six Critical Issues Key to Faith-based Voters			
PARTY	 REPUBLICAN	 DEMOCRATIC	 LIBERTARIAN
Life & Abortion	Appoint judges who'll support Sanctity of Life at all stages. Oppose the use of public funds to perform or promote abortion or subsidize health-care that includes abortion coverage. (pgs. 13-14)	Appoint judges who'll protect a woman's right to safe and legal abortion (pg. 25) Will continue to battle Republican efforts to defund Planned Parenthood (pg. 37)	Individual's life & liberty is foremost (pg. 2). Government should be kept out of "life decisions," leaving the question to each person for their conscientious consideration. (pg. 3)
Marriage	The foundation of society is the family - the union of one man and one woman. (pg. 11)	Same-sex "marriage" is accepted and embraced. LGBT rights will be defended and championed. (pg. 19)	Government should treat all personal relationships equally and not license or restrict them. (pg. 2-3)
Religious Freedom and Repeal of the Johnson Amendment	Full religious freedom at all times everywhere. Full repeal of the Johnson Amendment (pg. 11)	Will defend freedom of religion for "religious minorities" (groups in the Middle East), but no other mention of protections here in the states. (pg. 19)	Opposes government censorship/control of media. Favors freedom of religious expression as long as other's rights are also respected. (pg. 2)
2nd Amendment	Full 2nd Amendment support. Supports the repeal of bad legislation restricting gun rights (pgs. 12-13)	"Respects" rights of "responsible" gun owners but favors increasing legislation to curb gun violence. (pg. 39)	Full 2nd Amendment support. Opposes laws that restrict individuals rights to self-defense (pg. 3)
Support for Israel	"Unequivocal Support". Considered only country in the M.E. sharing essential US values of freedom of religion and speech. Committed to Israel's security; will ensure they have strong military edge over adversaries. Opposes BDS mvmt. (pg. 47)	Believes a strong Israel is vital to US interests. Will always support Israel's right to self-defense, and will ensure it has a strong military edge in region. Opposes BDS movement. (pgs. 49-50)	Would end international government intervention, and state, "We recognize the right of all people to resist tyranny and defend themselves and their rights." (pg. 6)
Climate Change & Use of US Energy Resources	Will analyze hard data on climate change. Sees UN efforts as political. Will reject agendas of Kyoto Protocol and Paris agreement. (pg. 22) Supports the enactment of policies to increase domestic energy production in order to reduce vulnerability to foreign influence. (pg. 20)	"Climate change is an urgent threat." 1st 100 days will convene US summit of all experts to solve climate crisis. America must run entirely on clean energy by mid-century and plan to have 50% of power from "clean energy sources" within 10 ys. (p.27)	Believes competitive free markets best way to solve climate issues. Supports private land ownership over government control. "Oppose all government control of energy pricing, allocation, and production." (pg. 4)

The page numbers referenced are from the approved Party Platforms. We encourage readers to study the full text found at www.salandlelightcouncil.org/elections-voting/. This guide has been legally approved for Churches and 501 (c) 3 organizations to share and distribute freely

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