

MWEG | CHOOSING A PRINCIPLED LEADER

A principled leader has an ethical obligation to work for the common good, beyond self-interest or the interest of their own political party. Keep in mind the following questions as you consider whom to vote for.

A candidate's history and campaign can tell a great deal about what type of leader they will be.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE CANDIDATE?

- Who are they (personal, work history), and do they act according to their professed principles?
- Do they have a good command of the issues?
- How is the candidate viewed in their own party, by their peers, and by those they work with?
- Do they act according to the principles important to you?

HOW DO OTHERS INFLUENCE THE CANDIDATE?

- Who are the major financial contributors to the candidate?
- What lobbies or organizations support or officially endorse the candidate?
- Who are the candidate's advisors and influences?

HOW DO THEY RUN THEIR CAMPAIGN?

Do they:

- Respond to competition with ad hominem attacks?
- Use rumors, fear mongering, or words intended to incite fear or an emotional response?
- Accept responsibility or pass the blame for their actions?
- Promise things they have no authority over?
- Evade real issues by offering vague solutions or avoiding answering questions?
- Use their ads to offer information on the issues, their character, and their qualifications?

A principled leader should work to promote principles of ethical government for the common good of society. Ask yourself which principles are most important to you and whether candidates advance those principles.

ENGAGEMENT AND CIVILITY

- Are they measured and thoughtful in their approach to problems and issues?
- Is their discourse civil and tolerant of differing viewpoints?
- Do they work to decrease polarization? Do they work for compromise?

GOVERNMENT ETHICS AND CORRUPTION

- Do they respect and abide by laws, norms, and institutions of democracy?
- Are they free from conflicts of interest?
- Do they garner public trust?

HUMAN DIGNITY – including human rights and equality:

- Are they inclusive or divisive – do they respect the race, nationality, or religion of others?
- Do they seek to understand the concerns of marginalized groups?
- Do they champion equal rights and equality of opportunity?
- Do they show compassion in their plans and interactions?

FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS and participation in democratic process:

- Do they support safe, fair, and accessible elections?
- Do they follow election law and abide by norms?
- Do they foster faith in our elections and agree to abide by their results?

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS AND FREE SPEECH

- Do they respect the press and support an independent and free press?
- Do they support the citizen's right to free speech and assembly?

DIPLOMACY AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

- Do they support and abide by international treaties and agreements?
- Are they able to engage in diplomacy to solve problems with other nations?
- Can they honor international alliances and participate in global solutions?

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

- Are they able to connect environmental issues to the health and well-being of citizens?
- Do they have plans that include good stewardship over the environment?

RELIEF OF HUMAN SUFFERING

- Do they have plans for immigration and refugees that are clear and fair?
- Do they treat all people with compassion and care?

No candidate will meet all of our personal criteria perfectly. Principled voters need to thoughtfully weigh various considerations and issues when selecting a candidate who is best suited for the office. Consider what matters most to you and what is needed most at the present time. After examining the items on this list (and any others you have thought of), consider whether your preferred candidate will be a principled leader.