Voter Guides: What’s on the ballot?

August 24, 2022
Agenda

• What is a voter guide?
• How do you create a voter guide?
• How to tell if a guide is nonpartisan
• Guides and tools you can use, plus guest speakers!
  • Paul Loeb, guides.vote
  • Sara Gifford, ActiVote
What is a voter guide?

Guides are a powerful tool for educating voters and helping them feel #VoteReady
Voter guides provide background info on either candidates, ballot measures, or both

- List who you can vote for and details on each candidate's experience and goals
- Explain ballot measures, which are specific questions or issues that voters approve or reject

Styles and approaches vary:
- Can be focused on federal, state, or local races
- Can cover many races/measures or just one
- Can be partisan or nonpartisan
- Can be candidate questionnaires or pulled from public info

What is a voter guide?
What’s the difference between....

**Sample Ballots**
- Usually distributed by state election offices
- Show races, candidates, and any ballot measures that will be on a voter’s real ballot
- May be identical to real ballot
- No additional info about races

**Voter Guides**
- Usually created by nonprofits, researchers, and others, not election offices
- May not include all candidates or measures
- Info comes from questionnaires, statements, website, or press of candidates or ballot measure
Creating a Voter Guide

For 501(c)(3) organizations
Want to create a Candidate Questionnaire?

One style of voter guide is the candidate questionnaire:

• Typically focus on just one office for election
• Directly engage with candidates and highlight your org’s issues of concern
• Good option for local races
Keep it nonpartisan

- Include questions on multiple of issues, or a range of diverse topics within issue
- Keep questions open ended. Yes/No questions have a more partisan appearance
- Distribute to all candidates running for the same office
- Put the same amount of effort into outreach/reminders for each candidate

- Don’t edit or paraphrase
- Don’t rate, rank, or criticize candidates
- Don’t publish if only one candidate responds
- Don’t share one candidate’s answers with another candidate before the guide is published
Candidate Questionnaire best practices

• Candidates want a big audience to make participation worth it
  • Consider teaming up with another organization
  • Think about a distribution plan ahead of launching the questionnaire

• Give candidates ample time to respond, so plan ahead

• Keeping the questionnaire short will increase the likelihood of getting responses

• If a candidate doesn’t respond despite repeated outreach, you can list “did not respond”
Create a Candidate Guide from public info

**Research**
- Include all major candidates running for office (appearing on ballot)
- Start with info from their website
- Then go to reputable media outlets for interviews or coverage
- Avoid social media if possible

**Format**
- Candidate photos
- Party affiliation
- Experience and qualifications
- Major endorsements from organizations or individuals
- Stance on issues *in their own words*
- Consistency across candidates
How to tell if a guide is nonpartisan

Only distribute nonpartisan voter guides and questionnaires
Signs a guide is too partisan

PACs and c4 advocacy groups can be more partisan than a c3 nonprofit can. Don’t distribute guides that:

- Explicitly endorse one candidate or party
- Rank, rate, or criticize candidates or parties
- Have narrow or leading questions
- Uses visual elements that imply a preference (examples: green vs. red, check marks vs. Xs, thumbs up vs. thumbs down, or flattering vs. unflattering photos)
- Have the organization’s stance on the same issues printed within the guide
Unlike races for office, nonprofits may weigh in on ballot measures and distribute guidance on whether to vote yes or no. Ballot measure advocacy is a form of lobbying.

Taking a position on ballot measures is OK

The Colorado Children’s Campaign positions on 2021 ballot measures impacting children and families:

- **Proposition 119**
  - Learning Enrichment and Academic Progress (LEAP) Program: **YES**

- **Proposition 120**
  - Property Tax Assessment Rate Reduction and Voter-Approved Revenue Change: **NO**

- **Question 2F**
  - Safe and Sound Denver: **NO**

[link to Colorado Children’s Campaign website: coloradokids.org]
Where to find nonpartisan guides

The hard work has already been done!
Two trusted sources

VOTE 411
ELECTION INFORMATION YOU NEED

BallotReady®
Introducing our new civic partner directory!

Get matched with the right Solutions Partner

Our team can help you find the best Solutions Partner to meet your needs.

CONNECT ME

ActiVote

ActiVote is changing the way citizens engage with their government. Our easy to use nonpartisan app educates voters on important issues, when and where they can cast...

Asian and Pacific Islander American Vote (APIAVote) is the nation's leading nonpartisan nonprofit dedicated to engaging, educating, and empowering Asian American...

Introducing our new civic partner directory!
Guest Speakers

Please use the Q&A function to ask our speakers questions
Be an informed voter

Guides.vote produces nonpartisan candidate guides that show where candidates stand, with links to credible sources, so you can go to the polls with confidence. We’ll roll out 2022 Guides as candidates are determined by the primaries.

Candidate & Issue Guides

Sign up for updates

email

Submit
“In today’s day and age, it’s hard to know what’s real and not. These nonpartisan guides gave students the ability to be educated voters and know they were getting accurate information.”

Katie Prebelich, Central Michigan University Student Body President
2022 North Carolina Senate Candidate Guide
Cheri Beasley (D) vs Ted Budd (R)

The Candidates

Cheri Beasley
Democrat
Website
cheribeaasley.com

Ted Budd
Republican
Website
tedbudd.com

The Issues
Taxes
Should corporations and wealthier individuals pay more or less taxes?

Cheri Beasley (D)
No position found on taxes for corporate and wealthy individuals. Criticizes “income inequality and the racial wealth gap.”

Ted Budd (R)
Less. Voted in 2017 for the Tax Cut act, which cut the corporate tax rate from 35% to 21% and lowered the top individual tax rate. Opposes reversing those cuts.

Voting Rules
Support tightened restrictions on such voting rules as absentee and early voting, and voter ID?

Cheri Beasley (D)
No. “Every eligible voter should be able to register, cast a ballot, and have that vote counted.” Supports “voting rights bills to provide essential safeguards to ensure our constitutional rights.”

Ted Budd (R)
Yes. Voted against bill to limit state restrictions on voting; it would allow the federal government to “overrule all 50 states and take over our elections.” Supports a voter ID requirement and “allowing state election officials to verify a voter’s citizenship.”
BUILD YOUR POWER. VOTE

ActiVote
The vast majority of eligible citizens do not vote in every national election.

- **FOR VOTERS:** As someone who votes frequently, why do you think other people don’t vote?
- **FOR NON-VOTERS:** When you don’t vote, what would you say is your main reason for not voting?

Don’t know the issues
Don’t know the candidates
Don’t know when the election is
No time for learning
How do we solve this problem?

“So I’m registered now what?!”
“I don’t have time to be informed”
“It’s too hard to participate”
Flip the script!

Get out the vote

from single point interactions to daily interactions
Build and support a Civic Habit

- Engagement from organizations they know & trust
- Notifications from ActiVote
- Email Reminders
- Text Reminders

Daily Democracy

Routine

Reward

- Voting
- iVoted stickers
- Earning ActiVote Badges

A friendly reminder that tomorrow is election day. Democracy depends on citizens like you — so please vote!

11/7/16 11:15am
Make it easy! Answer all voter questions!

- Who is on my ballot?
- What do they stand for?
- Why do they deserve my vote?
- Do they share my values?
- What offices are up for election?
- What do these offices do?
- Where can I cast my ballot?
- Drop boxes?
- Polling place locator?
- When is my next election?
- Why does my vote matter?
- When are the deadlines for the various steps in the process?
- How do I cast my ballot?
- How do I apply for absentee?
- How do I make a voting plan?
Who to vote for (or against) inspires participation

Who is on my ballot?

US Senate
Jun 7, 2022

- Alex Padilla
- Carlos Tapia
- Chuck Smith
- Cordie Williams
- Dan O'Dowd
- Daphne Bradford
- Deon Jenkins
- Don Grundmann
- Douglas Pierce
- Eleanor Garcia
- Enrique Petris

Governor of CA
Jun 7, 2022

Do they believe what I believe?
Knowing which offices are on the ballot & how they impact your life

What offices are on my ballot?
- NY Comptroller
- Saratoga County District Attorney
- Saratoga County District Attorney
- Saratoga County Treasurer
- Saratoga County Treasurer
- Greenfield Town Justice
- Greenfield Town Justice

What do these offices even do?
- Stephen Murphy
  - Democrat
  - County Recorder/Register of Deeds/Register of Mesne Conveyance
  - The County Recorder, Register of Deeds, or Register of Mesne Conveyance is the officer responsible for keeping records of vital statistics, notarized deeds of trust, and other deeds affecting real property.
  - Rating: 3.7 out of 5 stars
  - Learn more on:
    - http://www.murphydeeds.com/
    - https://facebook.com/StephenJMurphy92136
    - https://twitter.com/StephenJM9
  - Work history:
    - 31st Suffolk Register of Deeds
    - 2016-present
  - Education history:
    - Stonehill College
    - Bachelor's

Activote
Where do I find information?

Your simple & easy #VoteReady plan

Prepare for your Primary election

Get vote ready!

Everything in one spot!
Not only when is the election but when are all of the important deadlines.

All dates with countdowns!

When do I need to do things?

Request your ballot

Research shows that turnout is highest among those who plan their vote. Here is one easy question to check whether you are prepared.

How will you vote?
- [ ] In person
- [ ] Absentee/by mail
- [ ] Won't vote

Absentee rules
Any Minnesota resident can request an absentee ballot. If you are not yet registered, you will receive a voter registration form along with your absentee ballot.

ID requirements
Any Minnesota voter may apply for an absentee ballot. No excuse is required.

You may need to provide ID information when you request your ballot.

Note: Your absentee ballot cannot be counted unless it is notarized or has the signature of a witness who is a registered Minnesota voter.
- [x] expired ID
- [x] student ID
- [x] out-of-state ID

Request ballot deadlines
- By mail
  - Received 1 day before Election Day (Mon, Aug 8)
- In person
  - 1 day before Election Day (Mon, Aug 8)
- Online
  - 1 day before Election Day (Mon, Aug 8)

Submit ballot deadlines
- By mail
Why should I vote?

Because it impacts your community

Because of issues you care about

- INFRASTRUCTURE
  - Universal Broadband access

- FOREIGN POLICY
  - Foreign Aid

- DOMESTIC POLICY
  - Role of the Media

- TRADE
  - North American Trade: NAFTA / USMCA

- EDUCATION
  - Student debt crisis

- DEMOCRACY
  - No Fault Absentee Voting

- HOUSING
  - Legal representation in Eviction court

- MILITARY
  - US Military spending
The mechanics of voting can be tough. All key questions answered in one place.

**How do I get voter ID?**

- **Check your ID**
  - **Do you have a valid ID?**
    - Yes
    - No
    - Unsure
  
- **Voter ID requirements**
  - **ACCEPTABLE ID**
    - You can use one of the following photo IDs when voting for the first time in your precinct:
      - Pennsylvania driver’s license (must be unexpired)
      - PennDOT ID card (must be unexpired)
      - ID issued by Pennsylvania Commonwealth ID issued by United States government
      - US Passport military ID
      - Student ID Employee ID
    - **OR**
      - You can use a non-photo form of identification that shows your name and address:
        - Voter Registration Card ID issued by Pennsylvania Commonwealth
        - ID issued by United States government
        - Firearm permit
        - Current utility bill
        - Bank statement or paycheck
  
- **Important note**
  - Pennsylvania’s voter ID requirement for first-time voters at a precinct is separate from the federal voter registration requirement for first-time voters. Check those rules here.

**How do I plan my vote?**

- **Prepare to Vote**
  - Your May 17 election
  - Research shows that turnout is highest among those who plan their vote. Here are three easy questions to check whether you are prepared.
  
  - **How will you vote?**
    - On election day
    - Absentee/Mail-in vote
    - Early
    - Already voted early
    - Won’t vote

  - **Do you know where to vote?**
    - Yes
    - No

  - **Find your polling place**
    - [https://www.pevoterservices.pa.gov/Pages/PollingPlaceInfo.aspx](https://www.pevoterservices.pa.gov/Pages/PollingPlaceInfo.aspx)

  - **How many people will you bring?**
    - Nobody
    - 1
    - 2
    - 3

  - **Early voting info**
    - [https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Early-Voting.aspx](https://www.vote.pa.gov/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Early-Voting.aspx)

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      - ID issued by Pennsylvania Commonwealth ID issued by United States government
      - US Passport military ID
      - Student ID Employee ID
Teamwork makes the dream work

- Voter Registration (TurboVote)
- Voter Education
- Voter Engagement
- REMINDERS
- Community
I’m registered…. Now what?

Thanks for being registered to vote! The next step is to explore what will be on your ballot and make the critical choice for who deserves your vote.

This tool will help you find out what is on your ballot and stay engaged with YOUR democracy.

If you use a custom link, we can give you statistics after the election about voter registration & more importantly IF your constituents actually showed up to vote!
“We create our buildings & then they create us. Likewise, we construct our circle of friends and our communities and then they construct us.”

~Frank Lloyd Wright