

Evaluating Presidential Candidates

With the legislative session over, it has been interesting to watch the presidential “for sure” and “maybe” Republican candidates descending upon the state. This election cycle has a number of GOP candidates in it, similar to 2016, but in 2016 it seemed there were very few issues in which the candidates could differentiate themselves from one another. They nearly all declared themselves fiscally conservative, pro-tax cuts, pro-life, pro-economic growth, pro-energy independence, pro-secure-the-border, America-first foreign policy, pro-military, and strong supporters of constitutional rights. The same holds true for this election cycle; they all still hold these same stances.

But now add to it: support for law enforcement, pro-medical freedom, pro-freedom in a disaster emergency, protecting kids from the CRT woke agenda and LGBT ideology, and pro-parental rights. They all seem to be holding these stances as well.

In this election cycle, however, there are some additional significant issues in which the candidates could differentiate themselves from one another. If GOP Iowans can vet the candidates and ascertain these differences, it may help each of us decide who to support.

Here are some issues I think we could ask them about where you might get different answers:

1. **Pro-Life:** With the overturning of Roe vs. Wade, Republicans are differing in the best strategy to push the pro-life issue forward. Some are saying pro-life policy should now be considered only state-by-state. We are seeing that now and legislation differs widely from state to state. Others are saying there should be federal legislation to help provide protection in all states. I would support federal legislation while continuing to work state-by-state.

Questions have arisen whether the abortion issue can be settled at the federal level. Like the issue of slavery in the 1800's, the pro-life issue is a moral imperative that in all likelihood would have to be finally put to rest with a constitutional amendment.

It would be good to ask these candidates what they think is the best pro-life strategy.

- 2. Election Integrity:** The issue of the 2020 election is full of much circumstantial evidence and many substantial questions that have been raised over the past 3 years to indicate there was in all likelihood enough fraud in the election processes and practices used in the battleground states in particular to throw the election. Some also claim the same for different previous elections.

While the Constitution delegates the power to determine election processes to the states, the president can use the bully pulpit to call on states to bring integrity into their election processes and practices. The president can help bring needed pressure on states by pointing out and condemning bad practices and processes currently being used and urging states to clean up their act.

Some believe we must “get over 2020 and move on.” I believe we can only do that when bad election processes and practices are fixed and then we can move on. So this must be an issue for discussion with the presidential candidates.

It would be good to ask them if they believe there were any issues with the 2020 election and if so, how they think they can win if those issues are not resolved.

- 3. Private Property Rights:** This is an Iowa or Midwest-specific issue but it is a very important one. How strongly we uphold the constitutional protections of our private property rights will eventually affect the entire country. So it is important for the president to weigh in with his views.

The issue I’m referring to here is the threat of the use of the power of eminent domain against Iowa and other Midwest farmers and landowners by private companies for private use. This is the case of carbon capture pipeline companies who have been incentivized by federal government Green New Deal program taxpayer dollars to build and install pipelines over many areas of the state of Iowa. The federal and state constitutions as well as state law specify the power of eminent domain can only be granted for public use projects.

The pipeline companies and their supporters claim these projects are needed to keep the ethanol industry solvent in Iowa by enabling them to offer low-carbon fuel to markets that are demanding it. The

companies are backed by powerful economic interests and well-connected political donors.

Who will the presidential candidates stand with? Well-financed companies and political donors or farmers, landowners and We the People?

I don't know a presidential candidate who has taken a position on this issue. I would imagine they would have to get educated on it first. Their stance would tell you a lot about their strength on constitutional rights.

I would like to get as much information as I can about these 3 issues before I decide who to support.

Filing for Property Tax Exemptions

The property tax reform signed into law this year included a new senior homestead tax exemption and an increase in the exemption for military veterans. The Iowa Department of Revenue has updated the forms for 2023 on their website and they are available for eligible Iowans.

Filing for the Senior Homestead Tax Credit and Exemption

Information: A qualified claimant receiving the homestead credit must be 65 or older on or before January 1 of each assessment year to receive the exemption. Even if you already have the homestead credit you must file again for this special tax credit. Iowans who turn 65 in future years will need to file the form before July 1 of the year following their 65th birthday. The application only needs to be submitted once unless the taxpayer moves to a new primary residence. For the upcoming assessment year the exemption is for \$3,250 of taxable value. For assessment years beginning on or after January 1, 2024, the exemption is for \$6,500 of taxable value. If the exemption is granted, the exemption will be allowed for future years without additional filing, as long as the claimant continues to qualify. This exemption is in addition to the Homestead Tax Credit.

Due: July 1 to the local assessor (must be filed or postmarked to the assessor on or before this date) Depending on the county, the form may be turned in via email, mail, or in person.

Application: [Click here.](#)

Filing for the Military Service Tax Exemption

Information: The military service tax exemption is being increased to \$4,000 in taxable value for assessment years on or after January 1, 2023, for a honorably separated, retired, furloughed to a reserve, placed on inactive status, or discharged veteran. Military veterans currently receiving the exemption do not need to file a new application as long as the veteran or the veteran's spouse is the legal or equitable owner of the property on July 1 for which the exemption is allowed.

Due: July 1 to the local assessor (must be filed or postmarked to the assessor on or before this date). Depending on the county, the form may be turned in via email, mail, or in person.

Application: [Click here.](#)

Feel free to contact me with ideas, thoughts, and concerns. My phone is 319-987-3021 or you can email me at sandy.salmon@legis.iowa.gov . I want to hear what you are thinking and will listen to your input. Together we will work to make a difference for the future of Iowa. Thank you very much for the honor of representing you!

Sincerely,

Sandy