

## The guides.vote Guide Production Process

To create our fair, nonpartisan, and meticulously sourced candidate guides, our team of researchers, writers, and editors comb through candidate statements, voting records, websites, endorsements, and other credible sources to provide concise and trustworthy comparisons of candidate positions on multiple important issues. The guides are researched and written by former reporters for *Time*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the Associated Press, *Toronto Globe & Mail*, *Seattle Times*, and similar outlets.

This is our process:

- **The Setup.** First, we create a template for each new guide with the names, photos, and campaign websites of the candidates.
  - *Fair Presentation.* We place the candidates on the page in alphabetical order by last name. We work to ensure that the photos are as similar as possible, so that we don't have one candidate in a business suit and the other in a t-shirt.
  - *Carefully Selected Topics.* Each template contains a list of questions that we will research. These are chosen after extensive discussion by our core team, based on polling information as to what are the key areas of interest to our audience, and are presented in alphabetical order. That audience, while it has broadened, still leans primarily to younger voters.
- **Careful Research.** Then we do our preliminary research. The research work for each guide is done by a single researcher, who then writes draft responses to each question, based on that work.
  - *Diverse Sources.* We study campaign websites; newspaper articles; candidate Twitter feeds and other social media posts; public office voting records; web, radio, and TV interviews; and other sources of public information. We attempt to find at least three sources for each candidate's position around a specific question.
  - *Adapt to the Facts.* Sometimes an individual race doesn't fit into the general polling we consult when drafting our default topics. In some cases, if we don't find an answer for a specific question from either candidate, we delete the question. In other cases, we may find that both candidates have good answers to a question that is different from ours but covers a similar topic, and we revise the question. Sometimes we may find that one candidate has an answer for an important question but the other does not, even after extensive research. We keep the question but put "No position found" for the latter candidate. We check to make sure that one candidate does not have an unbalanced number of "No position found" instances. If that were to happen, we would consider changing the questions. And later in a campaign season, well after a guide is published, we check back to see if new position information has arisen. If there is new information, we will update the guide.
- **Rigorous Review.** Then each guide undergoes three editorial passes by three separate editors. Each editor looks for completeness, accuracy, clarity, and impartiality.
  - *Further Inquiry.* Sometimes, if a writer's response seems inadequate, an editor will do further research.
  - *Collaboration.* Often, the editors confer to discuss specific responses and reach a final conclusion, particularly where a candidate may have mixed responses on an issue, or a question may need to be modified because candidates address related issues, but not the one covered in that question.
- **The Final Product.** When the editing pass is complete, we send the finished guide for publishing both on the web and as a two-page PDF that can be printed and distributed as a flyer.