

2008 Voters Guide

(based on responses received as of 11 October 2008)

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The Atheist Community of Austin mailed a 2008 Candidates Questionnaire (see below) to 482 candidates for federal and state offices who will appear on 4 November 2008 election ballots in Texas. As of 11 October 2008, ACA received 50 returned questionnaires with responses (and four letters that indicate that candidates would not respond to the questionnaire).

Candidates were asked to indicate the strength of their agreement or disagreement with 23 statements by entry of one of the following initials at the beginning of each statement:

SA=Strongly Agree A=Agree U=Uncertain D=Disagree SD=Strongly Disagree

Response totals for the 23 statements are given in the following table:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	
Response Totals																								
SA = Strongly Agree	36	39	37	24	23	4	32	25	36	27	27	15	28	22	20	24	20	27	15	9	16	26	18	
A = Agree	11	7	6	18	13	6	9	9	12	11	19	3	5	15	12	15	13	20	9	12	11	15	11	
U = Uncertain	1	1	1	4	5	9	3	9	1	3	1	16	7	3	7	4	7	2	8	13	8	4	6	
D = Disagree	1	2	4	1	3	9	2	3	1	6	2	11	7	6	4	1	4	0	8	7	9	3	9	
SD = Strongly Disagree	1	1	1	1	6	19	1	3	0	2	0	4	1	2	4	6	3	0	10	6	4	1	5	

For the individual candidates, responses are given in the table below. An asterisk, *, indicates that the respondent modified the questionnaire statement to an extent that the response no longer addresses the questionnaire statement.

The election for State Senator District 17, one of the two elections for State Representative District 55, and one of the two elections for State Representative District 81 are for unexpired terms.

2008 Candidates Questionnaire

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Please indicate the strength of your agreement or disagreement with the statements below by entry of one of the following initials at the beginning of each statement:

SA=Strongly Agree A=Agree U=Uncertain D=Disagree SD=Strongly Disagree

___ 1. If I am (re-)elected, then I will listen to and fairly represent the interests of atheist constituents.

___ 2. I will not consider religion in any decision to hire or fire a member of my staff.

___ 3. I would sooner resign from office than allow a religious consideration to cause me to break my oath of office to support our nation's *Constitution*.

___ 4. Our *Constitution's* provision that "The Congress shall have Power ... To promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts", which was adopted unanimously at the Federal Convention of 1787, stands as convincing evidence that the Framers considered science and technology to be of fundamental importance.

- ___ 5. Public schools should provide age-appropriate, scientific information on methods of birth control and ways to reduce health risks of sexual activities.
- ___ 6. It is appropriate to teach alternatives to established and accepted scientific theories in public school science classes, regardless of supporting scientific evidence.
- ___ 7. The age of the Earth is closer to 4 billion years than to 6 thousand years.
- ___ 8. Speciation and the diversity of life are best explained by evolution through natural selection.
- ___ 9. Our *Constitution's* provision that “no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States”, which applies to all divisions of government (legislative, executive, judicial, military, federal, and state, including subdivisions thereof), should never be violated.
- ___ 10. Public school teachers should never be required to respond to religious tests, including to utter “under God” during the *Pledge of Allegiance*.
- ___ 11. Whenever children in public schools are free to proclaim “under God” during the *Pledge of Allegiance* they are free to remain silent or to proclaim alternatives.
- ___ 12. “E Pluribus Unum” or “In Science We Trust” would be a less divisive national motto than “In God We Trust”, “In Allah We Trust”, “In Shiva and Vishnu We Trust”, or “Gott Mit Uns”.
- ___ 13. Our *Constitution's* provision that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof” requires strict government neutrality in matters of religion and forbids government promotion of ceremonial Deism and monotheism.
- ___ 14. A government employee who promotes, rather than accommodates, religion in his/her official capacity should be reprimanded or fired.
- ___ 15. Tax exemptions given to religious organizations are discriminatory and/or burdensome to the public and should be either opened to atheistic organizations or eliminated altogether.
- ___ 16. Values of properties owned by religious organizations should periodically be appraised and made a matter of public record, along with values of associated property tax exemptions.
- ___ 17. A religious leader who learns of a commission of a felony should not be immune from prosecution for failure to report the crime.
- ___ 18. A prison inmate should not be paroled or granted prison favors on account of religion.
- ___ 19. A licensed pharmacist who, on account of religion, chooses not to dispense a prescription drug to a customer should have his or her license revoked.
- ___ 20. Parents who, on account of religion, prevent their children from receiving life-saving medical treatment should not be immune from prosecution or from loss of custody of their children.
- ___ 21. Schools that deny admission to, or otherwise discriminate against, children on account of the religions of the children, or their parents, should be ineligible to receive public education funds even if the funds are directed to the schools by individual parents (as with vouchers) and not by the government.
- ___ 22. An employer who discriminates based on an employee’s religion should be ineligible to receive public funds.
- ___ 23. The legal definition of marriage should not be restricted to one man with one woman.

