

7 Key Conversations for Making Your Vote Count

As the nation enters the 2024 election season, there are several key topics that are shaping the discourse and influencing voters. These topics reflect the concerns, values and priorities of a diverse electorate, encompassing a wide range of issues that are pivotal to the future of the United States. Here are seven leading conversations at the heart of election season 2024.

1. Religious Freedom

Religious freedom remains a cornerstone issue for many voters, particularly among evangelical Christians. The debate centers on ensuring that individuals and organizations can practice their faith without government interference. This topic includes concerns about laws and regulations that may compel religious institutions to act against their beliefs, such as mandates related to health care and education. Candidates are being scrutinized for their positions on protecting religious liberties and how they plan to address potential conflicts between religious convictions and public policy.

The issue has become increasingly complex in the face of modern societal changes. For instance, the meeting of religious freedom with LGBTQ+ rights presents ongoing challenges. Faith-based organizations seek exemptions from laws that infringe on their faith doctrines, particularly in areas like adoption services and employment practices. The political debate often hinges on finding a balance between protecting freedoms of faith and ensuring equal rights for all citizens.

2. Abortion and Pro-Life Advocacy

Abortion remains a polarizing issue in American politics, with significant implications for the 2024 presidential election. Pro-life advocates are pushing for stricter abortion regulations, while pro-choice supporters are fighting to protect access to abortion services. The positions of the candidates on this issue will significantly influence their support base, particularly among Christian voters who view the sanctity of life as a nonnegotiable principle.

The overturning of *Roe v. Wade* shifted the battleground to the state level, making it a crucial topic for voters. The Supreme Court's decision has led to a patchwork of laws across the country. This decentralization has intensified the political battle, with states enacting laws that range from complete bans to full protections of abortion rights. The presidential candidates' stances on federal funding for abortion, support for state-level restrictions and potential federal legislation will be critical in shaping voter opinions.

3. Family and Traditional Values

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The definition and role of family and traditional values in society are central themes in the 2024 election. This topic encompasses issues such as same-sex marriage, gender identity and parental rights in education. Many voters are concerned about ongoing erosion of traditional family structures and values, and they seek candidates who will champion policies that uphold these principles. The debate extends to educational content, with parents advocating for greater control over what is taught in schools regarding sexuality and gender, history and science.

The discourse around family and traditional values often reflects broader cultural skirmishes. Policies related to transgender rights and comprehensive sex education in schools are contentious topics. Many conservative voters feel that traditional values are under attack and seek leaders who will defend these principles. Conversely, progressive voters advocate for policies that promote inclusivity and respect for diverse family structures.

4. Religious Persecution Worldwide

Religious persecution around the globe is a significant concern for many voters, particularly members of the global Christian community. There is a growing call for the U.S. government to take a more active role in combating religious persecution and supporting religious minorities in countries where they face oppression. Voters are looking to presidential candidates to articulate clear strategies for addressing international religious freedom and for supporting humanitarian efforts aimed at protecting persecuted religious groups.

American voters are increasingly aware of global issues, including the persecution of religious minorities. From Christians in the Middle East and Africa, to Uighur Muslims in China and the decades-long crisis in North Korea, religious persecution is a pressing human rights issue. Voters want to know how presidential candidates plan to address these concerns, whether through diplomatic pressure, economic sanctions or humanitarian aid. Or all of the above. The candidates' commitment to religious freedom as a core element of foreign policy is under close scrutiny.

5. Health Care Reform

Health care reform is an enduring issue in American politics over tangents including accessibility, affordability and the

role of government in health care. Voters are still concerned about rising health care costs, insurance coverage and quality of care. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has further intensified discussions around public health infrastructure and preparedness.

The health care debate encompasses a wide range of issues, including Medicare expansion, prescription drug prices and mental health services. Voters are looking for candidates who propose innovative solutions to these challenges. The impact of the Affordable Care Act, the future of Medicaid and the role of private insurance companies are all key points of the conversation. The candidates' viable plans for improving health care access and affordability will be crucial in gaining voter trust and support. Proposals for health care reform are under close scrutiny, with voters seeking comprehensive solutions that balance compassion with practicality.

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6. Economic Policies and Job Creation

Voters vote their wallets, as the old line goes, and economic policies are timeless critical issues. The state of the economy, including inflation, tax policies and job opportunities, directly affects the daily lives of Americans in the ongoing aftermath of the pandemic's disruptions. Candidates' economic platforms are being evaluated for their potential to stimulate growth, create jobs, support small businesses and grow the economy. Voters are particularly interested in policies that address workforce development and economic vitality in an increasingly uncertain global market.

Are voters better off now than they were four years ago? The answer to that timeless question hinges on the economic landscape's varied and numerous factors, including technological advancements, globalization and how to efficiently and successfully incorporate environmental concerns. Voters are interested in candidates' plans for addressing these challenges through sustainable economic policies. Issues such as the minimum wage, corporate tax rates and policies driving robust free enterprise are pivotal. Each candidate's ability to present comprehensive strategies for economic growth that also address social and environmental considerations will be evaluated thoroughly.

7. National Security and Foreign Policy

National security and foreign policy remain paramount concerns for voters. Beginning with the wars in Ukraine and Israel, issues such as military strength, counter-terrorism strategies and international alliances are central to the debate. The geopolitical landscape is continually evolving, with new challenges arising from regions like the Middle East, Africa, Asia and Europe. Voters expect candidates to have a coherent and effective foreign policy that addresses threats to national security, promotes peace and stability, and maintains the United States' leadership on the global stage.

In an increasingly interconnected world, national security and foreign policy are even more critical. Voters are concerned about threats from state and non-state actors, cybersecurity and the United States' role in global conflicts. The candidates' positions on military spending, alliances with NATO and other international bodies, and strategies for dealing with emerging powers like China and India are central to the national security debate. Voters will demand clear vision ensuring both domestic safety and international

stability.

The Road Ahead

The 2024 election is set to be a defining moment for the United States, with voters deeply invested in the direction of the country. The diverse and complex issues that are at the forefront of voters' minds, from religious freedom to national security, encapsulating the breadth and depth of the fundamental values and concerns that shape everyday Americans' lives and are driving the conversations across the electoral landscape. As candidates campaign, deliver one more stump speech and present their platforms, voters will be keenly evaluating how their positions align with these critical issues.

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Derived from FrontLine books: "Make Your Vote Count" (2008) and "The Biblical Guide to Voting" (2012).