

# Tony Perkins: What We Can Expect From Donald Trump

Republican voters haven't been this active in a presidential primary season since 1980, Pew Research Center says. And about half of that sky-high turnout comes from the influential bloc of evangelical voters—who, many fear, could make their biggest impact this November by doing nothing at all. Six months away from deciding Barack Obama's successor, plenty of conservatives have yet to decide if they can or will support the GOP presumptive nominee Donald Trump.

The GOP's ticket-topper is clearly taking steps to address the concerns of conservatives, as evidenced by his recently released list of potential conservative court picks. But that bridge building will take on a whole new meaning on June 21, when social conservative leaders sit down with the real estate mogul to go beyond political stump speeches. As conservative leaders, we are deeply concerned about the state of our nation after nearly eight years of extremely liberal policies that have radically altered America's political and cultural landscape. The purpose of the meeting is to simply have a conversation with Donald Trump about America's future. Dr. Ben Carson, who has become a key adviser to Trump, is responsible for helping to set up the meeting.

I know that many of our friends and supporters are struggling to come to terms with a Trump candidacy, and I respect that. But let me say up front that there is nothing behind this meeting except the desire to sit down and have a frank conversation with a man who may very well end up succeeding President Obama. As I told Fox News's Todd Starnes, there is no preconceived outcome here. As a group, we are not supporting Trump or opposing him. This is all about fact gathering. I'm hopeful that we can have a discussion that could help conservative leaders make a decision about what to

do in this election. I want to be actively supportive of a candidate who can help turn this nation around. With Trump, I'm not there yet. I hope to be there, but I'm not there right now. A vice presidential pick is going to be very crucial to a lot of people. Mr. Trump doesn't have a track record, so I'll rely very heavily on whom he chooses as a running mate.

In the meantime, our goal is to try to find common ground on essential issues facing our country. If we find it, great. If we can't, these leaders are under no obligation to do anything. Now, there are some on both the inside and outside of the Trump camp who would dismiss—or even criticize—the opportunity to meet with the man who may soon hold the keys to the U.S. Supreme Court, foreign policy, national defense, and our most basic freedoms. But why would we refuse to have a conversation about our shared interests, especially if we have the opportunity to reinforce the importance of our core values?

As the president of the Southern Baptist Convention, Dr. Ronnie Floyd said, “We cannot change what exists or even alter it or adjust it sitting on the sidelines and prognosticating about the situation. This is about the possibility of being able to appoint the next four Supreme Court justices. This is about the dignity of human life from the womb to the tomb. This is about religious freedom. I'm not about to sit at home and not express something. I'm accountable to God, and I believe I'm accountable to my fellow Americans.”

For more on the Trump sit-down, check out my interview from over the weekend with Fox News's Shannon Bream.

**Tony Perkins** is Family Research Council's fourth and longest serving president, joining the organization in August 2003.