



Elect to End Torture: Questioning Candidates during the Pandemic

- Find online events – many congressional candidates and other local candidates are hosting virtual town-halls, online debates, and other online events that allow for questions.
- Call or email your candidates' campaigns and ask them if they are hosting any online events you can join. Contact information can generally be found on the candidates' campaign website.
- Call or email your state or local Democrat and Republican parties to ask them for information about online candidate events you can attend.
- Sign up to attend events and participate in question and answer sessions.
- Write or email your candidates for Congress or local office and ask them questions about their views on torture and other important issues.
- Tweet questions to your candidates.

Possible Questions

- President Trump has said that he would like to torture suspected terrorists – even if it doesn't work - because he believes they deserve it. Senator John McCain said that “torture compromises that which distinguishes us from our enemies” and that it “stained our national honor.” Who do you agree with?
- Some American prisoners are held in solitary confinement for years or decades without any opportunity for normal conversation with another human being. Many go insane under these conditions. What would you do to ensure that prisoners are treated humanely?
- President Trump called for a Muslim ban on people entering the country, and as President has banned people from a list of mostly Muslim countries. Do you think it's right to ban people from America because of their faith?
- President Obama said that “the very precision of drone strikes... can also lead a President and his team to view drone strikes as a cure-all for terrorism.” What would you do to ensure that drone strikes, targeted killing, is not always the default means of addressing perceived security threats?
- There are 40 people imprisoned in Guantanamo Bay Cuba. It costs over 13 million dollars per prisoner per year to keep them there – probably the most expensive prison on Earth. Most have never been tried for any crime and some of them were tortured by the CIA. What would you do to close the prison at Guantanamo?
- President Trump has cut the number of refugees allowed into the country to the lowest number ever. Do you think it's right to ban people fleeing torture, rape, murder, genocide, and terrorism from our country?

Tips for Getting the Best Response

- Research the positions of candidates. For candidates who have held office for a long time, use the NRCAT Action Fund's [Congressional Vote Scorecards](#). For others, use google to research any prior statements on torture or related topics.
- When you register for an online event, read all the registration information to see if you can learn anything about how to ask questions.
- Be pleasant and polite. Candidates are more likely to give unguarded answers if your question doesn't sound oppositional.
- If the candidate has previously said or done something good, start by thanking him or her for that step. It is very important to let candidates know that voters appreciate it when they do something good!
- Otherwise, try to introduce your question by connecting it to something the candidate has previously said. For example, if the candidate has mentioned terrorism, you might say something like "I believe it is very important to stop terrorism, but as a person of faith I'm concerned about how we do that. I want to ask..."

Publicizing Your Response

- If possible, record candidate responses to your questions (either with video or, if typed, by taking a screenshot or other photographic record). At a minimum write down their exact response to your question.
- Tell us what happened! Send a summary of your interaction with candidates to nrcatactionfund2020@gmail.com or call us at 202-547-1920. We want to know what your candidates say. Please share any video, screenshots, or other records you have of candidates responding to you.
- Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper about candidates' responses (good or bad).

Why this Matters

The 2008 elections gave us a President who ended the use of waterboarding and other so-called "enhanced interrogation" techniques. The 2016 election gave us a President who instituted Muslim bans, barred most refugees from entering the country, who has repeatedly stated his support for torture, and who refuses to transfer people out of Guantanamo even when the government has determined that they are not a threat. Elections matter. And you can help us elect a government that will change these policies by getting out and questioning candidates!



National Religious Campaign
Against Torture **Action Fund**

www.nrcatactionfund.org