

Patriot Vetting Committee (PVC)

FAQ

What is Vetting?

In politics, “vetting” is the process of evaluating and comparing candidates for public office, based on certain criteria. In modern times, it is customarily done by groups, based on their particular interests, needs, or purposes. Here, the idea is to influence ordinary voters to choose the candidates who best represent the group’s particular criteria, needs, and interests. For example, a public school teacher’s union would vet candidates based on how likely they are to support higher salaries, more job security and benefits for the teachers. The appeal to ordinary voters, of course, is offered under the guise of improving “education.”

In the patriot context, vetting is the type of mature, responsible political action that seeks to highlight candidates that voters can choose on behalf of their commitment to liberty and limited government. The PVC supports this vetting through a consensus-building process among the patriot groups in each state.

Why should our busy group take time for vetting at all?

Vetting candidates deserves the highest priority for attention of all patriot groups, because this is the best, most practical means for bringing real change in government. Vetting effects voting in elections that determine who will control the pertinent instrumentalities of government. This type of political action is, therefore, far more important than protesting and signing petitions about what candidates do after they are elected.

Without patriot group vetting, ordinary voters are limited to the negative influence of special interest vetting. Sympathetic voters are, therefore, left unguided by patriot group vetting, and tend to divide their vote among several suitable candidates, which usually assures the election or re-election of some well-financed candidate who is unfavorable to all. Patriot groups can only effectively stand against these negative influences by conducting positive vetting of their own.

Since primary elections already provide vetting, why not just wait for the general election until there are only two candidates involved?

Primary election vetting is rarely done by the individual voters themselves as ideally intended. Instead, they rely on guidance from special interests groups that conduct pre-primary vetting, which usually supports incumbent candidates and their allies.

If patriot groups don’t conduct vetting before the primaries, other pre-primary vetting will control the final primary election outcome. In the general election, vetting at this point is too late if the choice comes down to two unacceptable candidates. In jurisdictions with one-party dominance, pre-primary vetting is even more important because the matter is then already decided. The best response, therefore, is to offer patriot vetting before the primary elections.

Rather than conduct vetting, why not just have everyone sign a ‘no endorsement’ pledge before the primaries?

While a “no vetting” or “no endorsement” pledge is a fine idea in theory, it only works if everyone agrees. Unfortunately, given human nature, this type of uniform agreement is unlikely. In the end, therefore, at least some special interest groups will conduct pre-primary vetting regardless of any “no endorsement” pledge among the others. Since there are no practical means to stop all pre-primary vetting, patriot groups must conduct their own as a necessary countermeasure.

Why not just vet by opposing the candidate objectionable to all?

Vetting against an unacceptable candidate to all may be emotionally appealing and unify the groups in a negative way; however, it still doesn’t change the fact that someone will be elected anyway. If another candidate emerges who is just as unacceptable as the first, there is no change to the underlying conduct of the new elected official in office. Since “none of the above” never appears on any ballot, patriot groups must offer a more positive type of voter guidance.

Even where there are a number of acceptable candidates, positive guidance is necessary to avoid the result of splitting the vote among them, thus assuring the ultimate election of the one candidate unacceptable to all. The best solution, therefore, is to endorse a single candidate that all patriot groups can support by consensus. The PVC is especially designed to help bring about this type of consensus-building effort.

How can we trust the PVC will not impose the self-centered interests of its organizers?

Trust in personalities should not be a significant obstacle to affiliating for PVC support, since all services are free and participation is entirely voluntary. In any case, there should be no doubt about the key PVC organizer and founding member, Lee Havis, who has substantial background and many years of experience in the work of non-partisan candidate vetting. Most recently, he founded and served as chairman of the non-partisan vetting organization known as Maryland Public Assembly. Through this work, Lee has gained unique skills and knowledge about vetting which he now offers at no cost to patriot groups. In return, he receives no financial compensation for his voluntary operation of the PVC.

How can the PVC help us overcome strong differences in vetting that arise over specific issues and candidates?

The PVC plan for vetting has built-in checks and balances to overcome differences over issues and personalities that otherwise commonly occur in the process. For example, the PVC offers such means as specific time limits, secure communication, and open disclosure. In this way, the PVC approach builds unity around basic principles and procedures, rather than fragmentation due to division over specific issues and personalities.

Why is the PVC approach any better than other vetting means available?

Non-PVC vetting has various weaknesses and limitations which don’t exist in the PVC approach. For example, some non-PVC vetting requires candidates to answer long, complex, rigid, or vaguely worded written questionnaires that simply complicate and mislead those who must use them for vetting. In this situation, the most serious, reasonable candidates will not participate, due to its superficial, irrational nature. The PVC overcomes this issue by providing common sense questionnaires that have a concise and balanced format that all can easily understand and use.

Some non-PVC vetting amounts to a superficial opinion poll, limited perhaps to only a select number of pre-screened candidates. If this screening is done by those outside the control of patriot

groups, then vetting results have little effect to unify the groups together in the lead-up to election day. The PVC approach avoids these mistakes by offering a consensus-building process among the groups. This type of vetting maximizes the strength and power of the groups working together for the same candidates on election day.

Our group is already vetting candidates, so why do we need the outside help of PVC support now?

Since vetting is a highly specialized field, patriot groups that attempt to conduct this activity on their own tend to make many mistakes due to lack of experience and knowledge. For example, poor initial planning and execution leads to fragmented, incomplete results; and, perhaps even serious divisions over specific issues and personalities. PVC support helps correct and avoid these mistakes at any stage of the process.

Even though PVC support is most effectively employed from the very beginning, it is still very useful and available after other vetting procedures have already begun. PVC support is sufficiently flexible to adapt to a wide variety of situations.

Shouldn't we organize a single coalition of groups first, before we come for PVC support?

Organizing a single coalition of diverse patriot groups can be time-consuming and contentious. Since most of these groups are newly formed, they lack the internal cohesion and experience to easily formalize an effective coalition in a timely manner with others. Forming an organization or coalition too soon will, therefore, likely deviate from the common unifying principles of the groups, centering instead on control by certain key organizing personalities.

The PVC vetting approach is designed to facilitate consensus functioning before there is any formal organization. Following the natural order of "form follows function," functioning with PVC support logically comes before the form of any organized coalition.

Since many patriot groups in our state don't want to participate in vetting, how can the PVC help achieve any real unity and consensus with only a few participating in the process?

The PVC approach assures consensus among the various groups by keeping the process open and inclusive of all. This open, inclusive format, however, doesn't require or even anticipate that all groups participate exactly the same. In fact, groups will naturally participate differently based on their own particular needs and interests.

The flexible PVC format easily adapts to a diverse range of participation. For example, groups not affiliating can still choose to participate in rallies and public forums conducted with PVC support. Some may affiliate and participate only selectively in certain aspects of the process, while others assume a more active role. Still others may affiliate, and yet remain entirely silent and inactive except, perhaps, in support of vetted candidates during the final lead-up to election day. The PVC approach readily accommodates all these diverse types of participation, which in no way jeopardizes effective unity and consensus in the process.

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