



KENNETH BRONSTEIN

PRESIDENT'S "SERMON"

Why We Need an Atheist Voter's Guide

There are at least three important reasons why we need an Atheist Voter's Guide (or "Questionnaire"): to announce to the world that we secularists exist and are a large voting block, to inform our fellow nonbelievers of the issues important to us and to let the public know what issues impact us and why.

But first, let me emphasize that as a 501C non-profit organization, NEW YORK CITY ATHEISTS INC. cannot endorse any political candidates. We can, however, remind voters of the issues involved in this, or any other, election; we can define our secularist position on each issue; we can outline what we are looking for in a candidate that will hopefully have some bearing on these issues.

We strongly urge that you not judge a candidate by his personality, or the way he cuts his hair, or her attire or her oratory—but rather, use our questionnaire to determine which candidate will vote to advance secular issues and which candidate will work toward building the kind of world that secularists want to live in. In other words, use this questionnaire to guide you in casting an intelligent vote—but when you get into that voting booth, who you vote for is strictly between you and your Atheist conscience.

Top Concern: Supreme Court

The number-one issue for all Atheists is, of course, separation of church and state; in fact, some of the other issues we're passionate about are really contingent on the separation of church and state. This is a landmark bottleneck in our society that I see headed for the Supreme Court, hopefully in my lifetime. Therefore, the most critical question we must ask each candidate is: "If elected, who would you get (appoint, support or vote for) into the U.S. Supreme Court?"

The current composition of the Supreme Court, which consists of four liberal judges, four conservatives and one leaning-to-conservative, Justice Kennedy, is troubling. Justice Kennedy is often the swing vote in Supreme Court decisions, which assures us an assembly line of ultra-conservative decisions.

The next president could appoint up to four new justices during his term; in fact, there is a high probability that he will have to replace three or four retiring justices--and the justices approaching retirement age are, unfortunately, all liberals.

Tyranny of the Majority

Yet our last defense in America's aspiration to be a republic is the Supreme Court. This is where we guard against the tyranny of the majority—and in our country today, the majority are religious conservatives. We need diversity in the highest court in our land to guard against Supreme court decisions that may be skewed toward religiosity.

Here is a brief rundown on other issues that secularists need to pay close attention to:

- No Faith-Based Initiatives. This granting of funds to churches to do social work and other charitable public good deeds is, in effect, "payola" by the administration for block voting. There is no evidence that churches do a better job than government; in fact, churches are not required to have certified

personnel to do this work and can discriminate in who they serve and who they hire.

- No Restrictions on Science/Medical Research. We feel this age-old protectionism is a continuation of religion's negative impact on scientific progress that harks as far back as Galileo.
- No Special Rights for Religion. Pharmacists must sell medicines to people even if it is against their religion; doctors and hospitals must not refuse to do certain procedures because of religion. Religion should not impact on your medical treatment.
- No Public Display of Religious Symbols on Public Property. We don't oppose anyone practicing their religion; we just don't want them to shove it down the public's throat.
- No Reference to god on Currency or in the Pledge. Secularists consider the "under god" phrase to be insulting. Consider, for example, how the religionists would react if the government put "under NO god" on currency instead. Oh, the fury that would ensue!
- No Vouchers for Religious Schools. Vouchers are, in effect, public support of religious schools. It reduces funding for public schools, skims off the better students and leaves public schools heavily burdened with problem children.
- No Polling Places in Churches. Did you have to vote under a cross? Did you have to pass signs that say "Abortion is murder?" We need to designate alternatives to churches as polling sites.
- No Sex Education Based on Religious Beliefs. Too many federally funded sex education classes are teaching only abstinence as birth control. We favor realistic

information about birth control, marriage and other things.

- No Tax Exemptions for Churches. Isn't there something better we could do with the estimated \$1 trillion that we are now giving churches annually in the form of tax exemptions? My view is, churches are a business. Does the U.S. want to subsidize the god business?

Consider these urgent issues, my fellow Atheists, assess each candidate's support or nonsupport of them, and then go into that voting booth armed with this knowledge.

With atheists, agnostics and the unaffiliated now estimated to be up to 25 percent of America's population—some say there are more atheists than any other special interest group in the country, more even than African Americans, Jews or Muslims—we must show America that we do not like to have religion imposed on us. □



Sally Elliott



WWW.NYC-ATHEISTS.ORG

212-330-6794

NYC ATHEISTS VOTER'S QUESTIONNAIRE

NYC Atheists is a 501C3 non-profit educational association. Therefore we cannot endorse any political candidates. NYC Atheists has concluded that our most important political issue is the *Separation of Church and State*.

NYC Atheists has prepared a voter's questionnaire for those who want to re-establish the Separation of Church and State in this country.

NYC Atheists requests that voters question all candidates, especially those candidates they plan to vote for, about their position on the following issues:

- **No new conservative Supreme Court Justices.**
- **No Faith Based Initiatives.**
- **No Science/Medical legislation based upon religious beliefs.**
- **No Special Rights for religious beliefs.**
- **No Public Display of religious symbols.**
- **No Currency / Pledge references to god.**
- **No Vouchers for Religious schools.**
- **No Polling Places in Churches.**
- **No Marriage/Abortion/Sex Education legislation based upon religious beliefs.**
- **No Tax-Exempt status of churches.**



Web: www.nyc-atheists.org

NYC ATHEISTS INC.
Cooper Station - Box 93
NY, NY 10276-0093

212-330-6794

Questions that you, as an Atheist, must ask each candidate. (Atheist position is marked YES)

NYC ATHEISTS INC. VOTER'S QUESTIONNAIRE

1) Supreme Court:

The most important issue for Atheists is the selection of new Supreme Court Justices.

Question: Of the sitting Supreme Court Justices, which one best represents who you would have selected / supported / voted for?

NO YES



Scalia Thomas
Very Conservative

Alito Roberts
Conservative

Kennedy
Swing

Stevens

Souter Ginsburg
Progressive

Breyer

2) Faith Based Initiatives: (> \$3,000,000,000 per year):

Over \$3 billion per year of your tax dollars is granted as Faith Based Initiatives (FBI) to religious organizations as government-sponsored social welfare programs.

Question: Do Faith Based Initiatives violate the separation of church and state and should be terminated?

NO

ALLOWED w/restrictions

YES no FBI

Government funding to any Faith-Based (religious) organization or group with no restrictions such as proselytizing and hiring / firing.

Government funding to any Faith-Based (religious) organization or group, but restricting proselytizing and discrimination in hiring / firing.

No government funding of any Faith-Based (religious) organizations or groups.

3) Scientific and medical research government funding:

Question: Should the government fund adult stem cell research and not be restricted because of religious beliefs?

NO funding and restricts

YES fund w/restrictions

YES-fund w/o restrictions

4) Special individual rights based upon religious belief (examples):

- Pharmacist does not have to dispense birth control pills
- Taxi Cab driver will not drive someone to an abortion clinic
- Can fire employee for not attending a prayer meeting
- Can deny renting/selling because an individual is an Atheist/non-believer

Question: Do special individual religious rights in commerce violate separation of church/state and should not override discrimination laws?

NO

YES Individual religious rights in commerce violate separation of church/state and should not override discrimination laws.

5) Religious Symbols: (Cross, Crèche, Menorah, etc. ☩✠✡):

Question: Do religious symbols on Public (government property, buildings, etc.) violate separation of church and state?

- NO YES Religious symbols on Public (government property, buildings, etc.) violate separation of church and state.

6) Currency and Pledge of Allegiance

Question: Does reference to god on our currency and in the pledge of allegiance violate separation of church and state?

- NO YES Reference to god on our currency and the pledge of allegiance violates separation of church and state.

7) Student Vouchers for Religious Schools:

Question: Do student vouchers for religious schools violate separation of church / state and reduce funding for public schools?

- NO YES Violates church/State and reduces funding for public schools.

8) Polling Places in Churches:

Question: Do polling places in churches violate separation of church/state and can influence voters?

- NO YES Polling places in churches violate separation of church/state and can influence voters.

9) Marriage / Abortion / Sex education:

Question: Does legislation based upon religious belief on marriage, abortion and sex education violate separation church/ state?

- NO YES Legislation based upon religious belief in marriage, abortion and sex education violates separation of church / state.

10) Taxing Churches (Estimates are that up to ONE TRILLION dollars \$1,000,000,000,000 per year of tax loss: up to \$ 3,333 per American):



Question: Do you endorse eliminating the tax exemption for religion which costs taxpayers about a TRILLION DOLLARS (\$1,000,000,000,000) per year?

- NO (keep tax exemptions) YES (Tax Churches)
Tax loss: up to \$ 3.333 per American

**LAST DAY TO REGISTER TO VOTE
NOVEMBER 4, 2008 ELECTIONS**

New York: OCTOBER 10, 2008
New Jersey: OCTOBER 14, 2008
Connecticut: OCTOBER 21, 2008

ABSENTEE BALLOT

New York:
<http://cspan.www3.capwiz.com/cspan/webreturn/?url=http://www.elections.state.ny.us/Voting.html>

New Jersey:
http://cspan.www3.capwiz.com/cspan/webreturn?url=http://www.njelections.org/absentee_doe.html

Connecticut:
http://cspan.www3.capwiz.com/cspan/webreturn?url=http://www.ct.gov/sots/cwp/view.asp?a=3179&Q=392214&SOTSNav_GID=1846

NOVEMBER 2008 ELECTIONS

**FIND ELECTIONS:
FEDERAL/STATE/CITY**
<http://cspan.www.capwiz.com/cspan/election/home/>

INFO ON ELECTED OFFICIALS

Federal: President, Congress
State: Governor, State Legislators
City: Local Officials

<http://www3.capwiz.com/c-span/dbq/officials/>

SCORE CARD

Candidate: _____

Supreme Court:	YES	NO
Faith Based:	YES	NO
Special Rights:	YES	NO
Public Display:	YES	NO
Currency/Pledge:	YES	NO
Vouchers:	YES	NO
Polling Places:	YES	NO
Marriage/Abortion:	YES	NO
Tax Exemption:	YES	NO

Candidate: _____

Supreme Court:	YES	NO
Faith Based:	YES	NO
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Candidate: _____

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Marriage/Abortion:	YES	NO
Tax Exemption:	YES	NO

NOTES

UPCOMING SEPTEMBER EVENTS

SEPT. 6, 13, 20, 2008 (SAT.) 10AM- 6 PM
NYCA STREET TABLING

Where: Columbus Circle
Front of Time Warner Building-Broadway (59/60)

Shift one: 10:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.
Shift two: 1:00 P.M. - 6:00 P.M.

Great time to meet the public
Wonderful experience.

SEPTEMBER 14, 2008 (Sunday) 12:00 PM
NYCA Brunch, Speaker, Book Club, Library

Where: Kennedy's Restaurant
327 West 57th St. (8th/9th Ave.)
Cost: \$20 (includes brunch, one drink, tax, tip)

Speaker: John Rafferty
Subject: "United States is NOT a Christian Nation"

John Rafferty is president of the Secular Humanists Society of New York. He will present his well-researched analysis, in which he concludes that the United States, as a nation, is not based upon Christianity.

Book Club / Library

After brunch, we move to the NYCA Library located on East 79th Street.

We continue discussing Christopher Hitchens' *god is not Great*, Chapter 11: "The Lowly Stamp of Their Origin," Religion's Corrupt Beginnings.

Need not have read the assignment to participate.

SEPTEMBER 16, 2008 (Tuesday) 7:00 PM
NYC Atheists Discussion Meetup

Location: Stone Creek Bar and Lounge
140 East 27th St. (3rd/Lex)

NATTY IS BACK

If you are into lively discussions, interesting people, provocative ideas, challenging conversation; if you like people who make you think and let you talk, if you'd like to get to know your fellow atheists better,

what they're really like with no pretensions, no censorship, no affectations, this is the place for you.

Cost: Free (cash food and bar)
Register: <http://atheists.meetup.com>

SEPTEMBER 25-28, 2008
ATHEIST ALLIANCE INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE (Unsinkable Atheism)

The convention will be held the weekend of September 25--28, 2008 on the beautiful and historic Queen Mary, which is permanently docked in Long Beach, California. See website for further information.

www.atheistalliance.org/conventions/2008/info.php

PROUD TO BE AN ATHEIST

NYC Atheists Blog

<http://nyc-atheists.org/blog/>

**This newsletter is published by
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Publisher – Kenneth Bronstein
Editor – Jane Everhart**

Get Involved

- * **Get candidates to respond to the NYCA questionnaire.**
- * **Make sure you are registered and vote.**
- * **Contact friends: (1) and (2) above.**
- * **Get involved in a candidate's organization.**
- * **Contact Betsy Gordon: (NYCA volunteer activist coordinator) elizabethjgordon@hotmail.com for specific opportunities.**

UPCOMING EVENTS AND MEETINGS

SEPTEMBER 2008

Sept. 6*	Sat. .	10AM-6PM	NYCA Street Tabling
Sept. 13*	Sat. .	10AM-6PM	NYCA Street Tabling
Sept. 14***	Sun.	12:00 PM	NYCA Brunch/Book Club/Library
Sept. 16****	Tue.	7:00 PM	NYCA Meet-Up and Discussion
Sept. 20 *	Sat.	10AM-6PM	NYCA Street Tabling
Sept. 25-28	Fri-Sun.		Atheist Alliance International Conference

OCTOBER 2008

Oct. 4*	Sat. .	10AM-6PM	NYCA Street Tabling
Oct. 6**	Mon.	7:00PM	NYCA Atheists Lifestyle Discussion Group
Oct. 11*	Sat. .	10AM-6PM	NYCA Street Tabling
Oct. 12***	Sun.	12:00 PM	NYCA Brunch/Book Club/Library
Oct. 18*	Sat.	10AM-6PM	NYCA Street Tabling
Oct. 21****	Tue.	7:00 PM	NYCA Meet-Up and Discussion
Oct. 25*	Sat.	10AM-6PM	NYCA Street Tabling
Oct. 30*****	Thur.	6:30 PM	NYCA Monthly meeting

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* Columbus Circle – Front of Time Warner Building – Broadway (59/60)

** Location: Call Ken Bronstein 212-535-7425

*** Kennedy's Restaurant – 327 West 57th St. (8th/9th) – Rear Room

**** Stone Creek Bar and Lounge – 140 East 27th St. (3rd/Lex)

***** SLC Conference Center–352 Seventh Ave./16th Floor-(29/30th St.)

WEDNESDAYS

THIS WEEKIN ATHEISM

6:30 PM (Manhattan Cable # 57)
Live Streaming: WWW.MNN.ORG

THURSDAYS

NYC ATHEISTS CABLE SHOW

7:00 PM (Manhattan Cable # 67)
Live Streaming: WWW.MNN.ORG

THURSDAYS

ATHEISTS BOOK CLUB

7:30 PM (Manhattan Cable # 67)
Live Streaming: WWW.MNN.ORG

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Cooper Station
P.O. Box 93
NY, NY 10276-0093

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