

I Am a Values Voter
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I am a values voter. I value life. I value the lives of women who are alive in the world today. I understand the importance that many people, myself among them, place upon unborn human life. However, the question for me as a values voter is: to whom does the state owe its protection? The state owes its primary protection to born citizens. Thus, any law that fails to protect a woman's autonomy over her own body fails to meet the state's obligation.

History has shown us that laws do not protect this right will drive desperate women, especially poor women, to seek illegal abortions from unskilled practitioners thereby putting their lives and their reproductive futures in jeopardy. Those of us who value unborn life ought to work toward providing care for women and children both within the sphere of public policy and within church and community organizations. Those of us who value unborn life ought to value the lives of children after they are born, and we ought to be willing to walk with a woman and her children for 20 years or more as she rears her children into adulthood.

I am a values voter. I value marriage and equal protection under the law. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered (LGBT) people deserve the same rights from their government as do heterosexual people. If the state licenses marriages for heterosexual people, it should license them for homosexual people. However, whether or not the state ought to be in the marriage business at all is arguable. The state can allow certain rights and require certain obligations to couples who want to be legally recognized as such. However, all that is within the state's power is to grant legal permission.

This can be done through civil unions or domestic partnership laws for everyone. If marriage is holy, then we ought to leave it to faith communities. Those who believe that marriage for LGBT people is wrong ought not be obligated to perform such marriages. Faith communities willing to bless them ought to be allowed to do so.

I am a values voter. I value care for the least among us. I want my government working to provide health care and child care and excellent public schools in every community. I want my government to provide decent housing and enough food for all its citizens. I want my government to participate in the community of nations such that it helps the poor of other nations to lead decent lives in their home countries. I want my government to take the Universal Declaration of Human Rights seriously.

I am a values voter. I value family, both the nuclear family and the extended family. I want my government to respect everyone's family unit, even those of the poor and of undocumented workers. Immigration laws that separate parents and children violate family values. Welfare policies that keep fathers from their wives and children violate family values.

I am a values voter. I value peace. I do not want my government raining down death and destruction on innocent women, men and children, animals, and ecology in the name of my security. I want policy makers in my government to spend the resources of the nation to provide food, clean water, medicine, schools, and infrastructure to people around the world, and not to spend the nation's resources to export military hardware. More people die daily from small arms than from weapons of mass destruction. The United States is one of the world's most prolific manufacturers of small arms; it is among the world's leading arms merchants. Thus, the United States is indirectly responsible for much death and destruction in the world. I plan to vote for people who will bring this to an end. I am a values voter.

