

## House Republican Press Release

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### Your (Non-Partisan) Election Guide! Part 2



*By State Representative John J. Ryan*

No, I have not gotten to Yankee Stadium this year (I did manage two Tanglewoods and one Caramoor, however), it is officially autumn, and Election Day will be upon us before you know it. So if I can encourage you to devote just a little bit of thought and analysis to the process of reviewing the candidates you are voting for, you will hopefully feel better about the process, and it will dawn on you that your vote, and involvement does make a difference! (Those are **your** tax dollars the government is spending, remember!)

So, let's pick up from where we left off last time, the goal being that we hope you remember that a voter is a consumer, and your knowledge of the product (as distinguished from mere packaging and marketing) usually puts a consumer in good stead:

- Experience counts doesn't it?...We don't mean incumbent vs. newcomer here (which is a different topic!), but is it important that a candidate have some experience and involvement with various levels of government, and issues? I would be the first one to tell you that I fervently wish government worked more like a business, but it doesn't, and is not likely to in my lifetime!
- If Candidate X has all the solutions to tax and economic issues, but never balanced the checkbook of the smallest business, should that be a factor to you? Or to put it another way, yes it is possible to win the Super Bowl/World Series/National Title in your rookie year as Head Coach, but does it happen often?
- Candidate Z was endorsed by the Society for the Furtherance of Wombats!!... Trumpeting a series of endorsements is something everyone seems to do, but.....is the endorsing group one that actually has been around a while, and is a "real" organization? Is the endorsing group one set up for the sole purpose of endorsing Wombat Party candidates? Is the candidate's brother-in-law on the endorsement board? It is not really too hard to find this stuff out, you know!) So a candidate endorsed by established, sane groups, and if the groups have a variety of positions/issues, might be something to consider.(And please do not be offended if you are a wombat, or are a wombat sympathizer; we had to pick somebody!)

- Positive/Negative....Let's face it, political campaigns often involve marketing consultants, and these folks love attack ads, and negative campaigning, and they think us dumb voters like this drivel, and tell candidates that negative stuff works. "My opponent was actually seen driving on that same highway that OJ was trying to make his getaway on!" Since you are the consumer, you control the product choice. If a candidate has as a campaign position that their opponent is bad, always wrong, and probably can't even get out of bed correctly, what does it say about someone who makes personal attack the main theme of a campaign? However, the track record of an elected official is how he/she votes, and in my humble view, a well-established voting pattern is totally fair game to evaluate performance; in my humble view, picking 2-3 votes out of many 100s of votes ain't no pattern. As a wise judge once said: The best hitters in Cooperstown struck out some of the time, and most other folks never even made the team.
- Meet the candidate!... OK, OK; I know that this is not too helpful if you were trying to evaluate a Presidential candidate, but in the small New England state of Connecticut, it is actually pretty easy to get to actually see, hear and evaluate ANY CANDIDATE FOR ANY OFFICE in the flesh, if you want to go to a little time and trouble. There are all sorts of debates, campaign events, forums (which is absolutely bad Latin, if you think about it) where you can see for yourself.

Would you be surprised to learn that some political figures, in reality, are pompous, indifferent, phonies who sound like know-it-alls, and that others actually are sincere, earnest, hard-working, well-informed and affable? Same caveat as getting a sports autograph here; even the saints (and I don't mean the football team) have their bad days, but usually, what you see is what you get. And don't take my word for it, go out and listen to candidates. (But if you want, you can ask me "off the record" sometime about the famous politician who knocked over a little old lady by accident, and then yelled at her for being in the way! A classic.)

- Lastly, remember you vote for candidates, not causes ....I do not care what the cause is or how important you may think it is. At the end of the day, a person gets elected, and a person will vote on issues, and this or that bill, and zillions of other pieces of legislation. A "cause" will not take your phone call, or answer your e-mail, or care if there is a pothole in your street.

This is a topic that can go on endlessly, but I trust if you are interested enough to read this far, then you must have the idea. Please be part of the process, and not part of the problem.

Please feel free to contact me with your concerns and issues. As your state representative, it is my job, and my priority to represent you and to make sure that your needs and concerns are addressed at the capitol. You can write to me at Room 4200, Legislative Office Building, Hartford, CT 06106-1591, send me e-mail at [John.Ryan@housegov.state.ct.us](mailto:John.Ryan@housegov.state.ct.us) or call my office toll-free at 1-800-842-1423.