

Role of a Delegate

The most important election in Utah occurs in your own neighborhood caucus once every two years. There, you can be chosen by your neighbors, and vested with the authority to serve as a delegate. You will have three vital responsibilities:

- Understand the Republican Party Platform
- Vet the candidates
- Study the rule and platform change proposals and resolutions

Why must you understand the party platform? Because you are responsible to identify and support candidates who adhere to the platform. If you are not familiar with the platform, then you cannot competently judge whether a candidate will adhere to it.

Party rules require candidates to sign a statement that declares their support for the platform, and a willingness to “accept it as the standard by which [their] performance as a candidate and as an officeholder should be evaluated.”

Delegates must not have a bias for any candidate at the time of the neighborhood elections. Your mind must be open. You must not blindly support candidates that are popular with your neighborhood. You must give all candidates a fair hearing.

Delegates allocate a significant portion of their time to research, interview, and vet the candidates. On average, you should devote at least two hours per candidate in each race. Some of this time may be one-on-one (in person or on the phone), some may be in a small-group setting (in a home or school or civic center), and some may be at a debate, at a “Meet the Candidates” event, or at the convention. Ideally, you will see and hear the candidates on multiple occasions and settings.

You should ask them some of your own questions—in an objective manner so the candidates will respond candidly, or without knowing your mind on the issue. Make notes while you listen to candidates speak. Casting an ignorant vote is worse than not voting.

Study the public record of each candidate. Learn how the candidate voted on issues. Votes are recorded and published for anyone who has served in the Utah Legislature (le.utah.gov) or in the US Congress (govtrack.us). Examine third-party indices created by groups that rate legislative performance; e.g., Freedom Index (jbs.org), Utah Grassroots (www.utahgrassroots.org), etc. Past performance is the best indicator of future performance.

Finally, delegates will be voting on rule change proposals, platform change proposals, and resolutions. These items are usually posted on the party web site. Familiarize yourself with each proposal, discuss it with other delegates and with constituents in your precinct, and make a tentative decision on how you will vote on it. You may have to read and study the party constitution, the party bylaws, and the party platform. You must come to understand the

issues: what change is being proposed, what the proposal accomplishes, and what (if any) adverse side effects the change may cause.

In review, you are a delegate who is vested with a public trust. You have a duty to:

- Understand the Republican Party Platform
- Vet the candidates
- Study the rule and platform change proposals and resolutions

Doing this requires time and effort, but that is the sacred role of a delegate.