



WHY YOU SHOULD CONSIDER RUNNING FOR OFFICE

Decisions are made by those who occupy the decision-making seats. We can spend an enormous time trying to convince our elected leaders to agree with us and vote in favor of policy and budget priorities aligned with our values.

But let's be clear.

Elected officials are not clean slates. They don't sit back, let a debate occur, and then side with the "winner" of the debate. They came into their positions believing a core set of values, with the support of others who support those values.

If elected leaders are not leading on issues that matter to you, you've got three choices:

- 1) Sit back and allow elected leaders to ignore your values and priorities;
- 2) Support candidates who support your values and priorities; or
- 3) Become the person in the decision chair – be the elected leader who will lead on your values and priorities

Vision for Change

America needs leaders at all levels of government who know what they stand for, and has a progressive vision for leading change in our community. Elected office is a powerful way to actively be part of decision making that can help that vision become a reality.

Do you have a vision for change for your community that is rooted in your values?

- Why is this change so urgently needed?
- What will happen if we don't work towards this change?
- Why are you motivated to keep working towards this vision?
- Is your vision concrete? Can you draw a picture of it?

The Three C's

Too often we encounter people who have the right values, have a vision for change, but say, "People like me can't get elected." We need more people willing to step up to the plate, know what they stand for, and be prepared to lead a vision for change in our communities. You are ready to be a candidate if you can strongly demonstrate:

- **Credibility:** Do you have the reputation and the experiences to be an effective leader in your community? Do you have a story that connects you to your community, relates to a broader community, and can connect to a call to action for your community? Do you have the relationships and networks to support your campaign and raise the resources to communicate your vision of change to voters and win their votes. Are you (and do others see you as) a viable candidate in the race you are considering?

- **Conviction:** Do you know what you stand for and can clearly articulate the values that inform your beliefs? A candidate connects with voters on an emotional level by communicating a shared set of values with voters. Voters make decision on who they vote for on an emotional level. Conviction also keeps you true to who you are once you are elected.

- **Commitment:** Are you fully committed to working towards your vision of change? Does



the vision reflect your motivation and passion for change? Are you prepared to be part of a broader movement that shares your vision to achieve long-term sustainable change in our community and country? Furthermore, are you committed to doing what it takes to win election?

Campaigns require a lot of time and energy, and it's not always fun and excitement. There are many who can be there to help you, but the team cannot be more committed than the candidate. Be tough and honest with yourself. You might not be 100% ready and need time to prepare to gain more credibility, articulate your convictions, and demonstrate your commitment to running for office. The important thing is that you consider it, and reach out to support communities to help you chart a course, so that when you decide to run, you stand the best chances at winning.

Holding elected office is not the only way to achieve change in your community, but is highly impactful when it comes to government's decision. If you are inspired to lead change major in your community and your county, then you should consider running for office.