

Bahá'í elections and voting information

“When called upon to vote in a Bahá'í election, believers should be aware that they are carrying out a sacred task unique to this Dispensation.”

Spirit of participation

Quotations:

- On the election day, the friends must wholeheartedly participate in the elections, in unity and amity, turning their hearts to God, detached from all things but Him, seeking His guidance and supplicating His aid and bounty. *Shoghi Effendi, letter to the friends in Persia, 27 February 1923*
- When called upon to vote in a Bahá'í election, believers should be aware that they are carrying out a sacred task unique to this Dispensation. They should approach this duty in a prayerful attitude, seeking divine guidance and confirmation. As Shoghi Effendi has advised, “they must turn completely to God, and with a purity of motive, a freedom of spirit and a sanctity of heart, participate in the elections.” *Universal House of Justice, 25 March 2007, to the Bahá'ís of the World*

Deciding who to vote for

Quotations:

- ...it is incumbent upon the chosen delegates to consider without the least trace of passion and prejudice, and irrespective of any material consideration, the names of only those who can best combine the necessary qualities of unquestioned loyalty, of selfless devotion, of a well-trained mind, of recognised ability and mature experience. *Shoghi Effendi, Bahá'í Administration, p. 88*
- In regard to your question about qualifications of delegates and Assembly members, the qualifications which he outlined are really applicable to anyone we elect to a Bahá'í office, whatever its nature. But those are only an indication, they do not mean people who don't fulfill them cannot be elected to office. We must aim as high as we can. *Shoghi Effendi, Unfolding Destiny, p. 207*
- With a heightened awareness of the functions to be performed by the elected body, the believer can properly assess those for whom a vote should be cast. From among the pool of those whom the elector believes to be qualified to serve, selection should be made with due consideration given to such other factors as age distribution, diversity, and gender. The elector should make his choice after careful thought over an extended period before the actual election. *The Universal House of Justice, letter to the Bahá'ís of the world, 25 March 2007*

Regarding voting for oneself, the beloved Guardian has stated: “This is entirely a matter of conscience; if the individual feels for some reason justified in voting for himself, he is free to do so.”

Preparing to vote

Quotation:

- The manner in which the elector exercises the right and privilege to cast his vote is therefore of great significance. Shoghi Effendi's instruction in this passage further explains that "to be able to make a wise choice at the election time, it is necessary for him to be in close and continued contact with all local activities, be they teaching, administrative or otherwise, and to fully and whole-heartedly participate in the affairs of the local as well as national committees and assemblies in his country. It is only in this way that a believer can develop a true social consciousness and acquire a true sense of responsibility in matters affecting the interests of the Cause. Bahá'í community life thus makes it a duty for every loyal and faithful believer to become an intelligent, well-informed and responsible elector, and also gives him the opportunity of raising himself to such a station." (*Universal House of Justice, 25 March 2007 to the Bahá'ís of the World*)

Information about those eligible for election

Those who are eligible to vote are:

- Any Bahá'í whose membership is in good standing, who is at least **eighteen years of age**, as of the date of this unit convention, and is a resident of the respective unit.

Those who are eligible to be voted for are:

- Any Bahá'í whose membership is in good standing, who is at least **twenty-one years of age**, as of the date of this unit convention, and is a resident of the respective unit. *The person does not have to be present at the unit convention meeting.*

The Head Teller has a list of those eligible for election in the unit which any voter may ask to peruse, prior to voting. If you are unsure of the status of an individual that you want to vote for, you may discreetly check by asking to peruse the Head Teller's list.

Please also note that members of the **Continental Board of Counsellors** are entitled to vote but are NOT eligible for election as delegates. An **Auxiliary Board member** is entitled to vote. Auxiliary Board members are eligible for election as delegates, but if elected, must decide whether to retain membership on the Board or accept the post of delegate, as they cannot serve in both capacities at the same time. A Board member should be allowed a reasonable length of time to make a choice and should feel no compulsion to decide immediately after the results of the election are announced.

If you are unclear about any of the above, please ask the Head Teller for advice.