

Choose Between

Guiding Principles



Seven commitments behind every match on choosebetween.us, and what they mean for you.

In this document

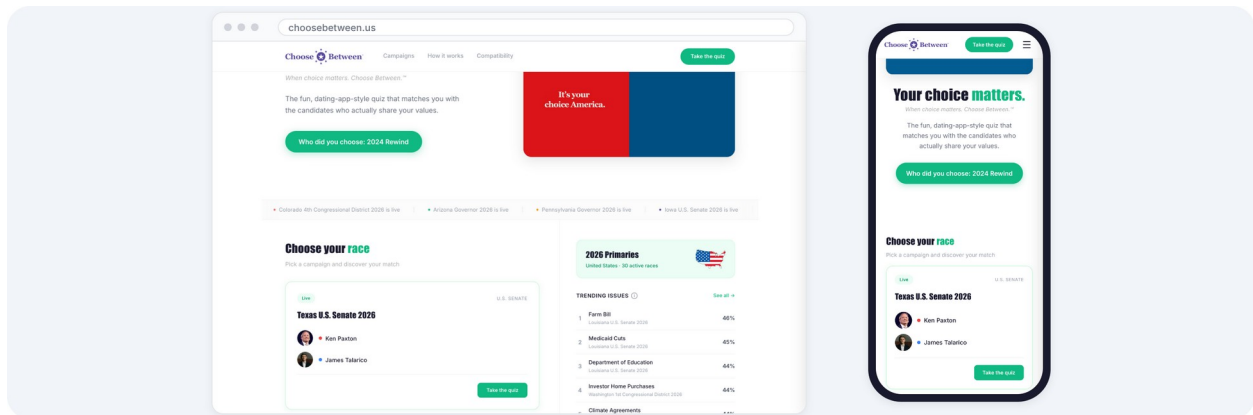
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Start here

Choose Between does one thing. You answer a set of questions about the issues in a race, and we show you how closely your answers line up with what each candidate has said and done on the record. You get a percentage for every candidate in the matchup and a report that shows where you agree and where you don't. There's no account, no party registration and no name required.

A site that compares people with candidates has to earn trust, so we wrote down the rules we hold ourselves to. There are seven. Each one below is stated plainly and then explained, including the parts that work against us. If you read nothing else, read Principle 4.



Screen 1 shows the homepage and one of its race cards.

1 The record decides

A candidate's position on Choose Between comes from what that candidate has said or done in public, never from what we think they believe.

Every position is dated and linked to its source, and each one carries a marker. "Own words" means the candidate said it in the first person, in a debate, an interview, a speech or a statement on their own campaign site. "Cited" means we're pointing at an act when their words on that question aren't on the record: a vote, a bill they sponsored or signed, an official statement or a show of hands at a debate. Own words come first; a cited act is used when it's the clearest evidence there is. Third-person descriptions of a candidate don't qualify, and neither do scorecards or ratings from outside groups. The sources behind every position in your matchup are listed at the foot of your Compatibility Report, with the marker, the outlet, the date and the link.

We use software, including AI tools, to help find and sort through sources, and a member of our team reviews each position before it goes live. Where a summary on the site was written with AI, it's labeled, and the sources sit underneath it so you can check our work.

A matchup usually features two candidates. Other candidates on the ballot are listed with their party, but their positions aren't compared. Which races and candidates we feature is our editorial call, and leaving someone out says nothing about them.

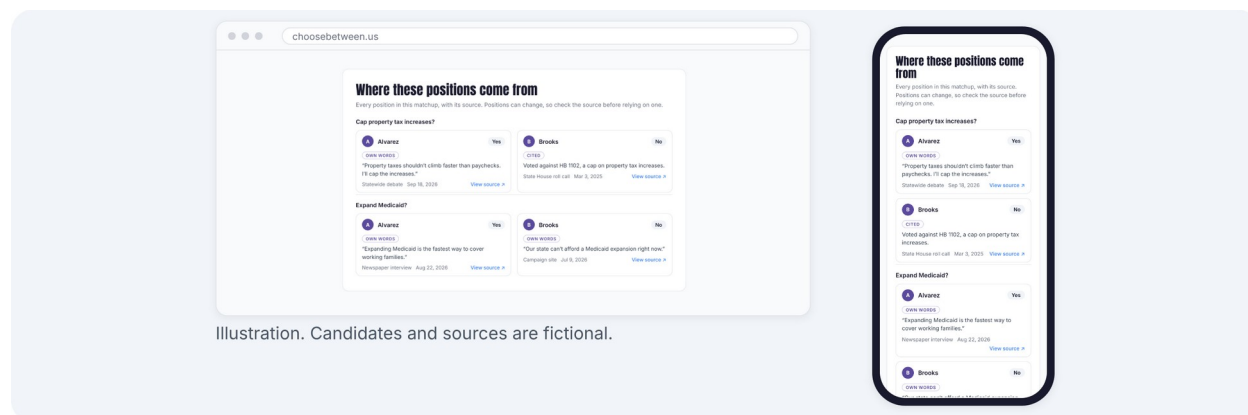


Illustration. Candidates and sources are fictional.

Screen 2 shows the foot of the Compatibility Report, where the positions in your matchup are listed with their sources.

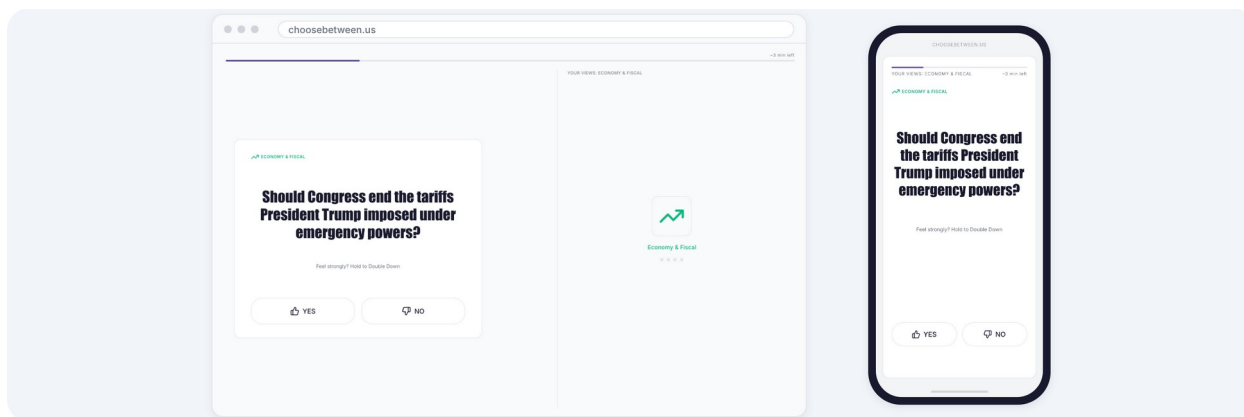
2 Every race gets its own questions

We don't run one national quiz and apply it everywhere. The issues that separate two candidates in Ohio are rarely the issues that separate two candidates in Arizona, so each race gets questions written for it.

A question makes a quiz only when we can place each featured candidate on it from the record. If we can find one candidate's position but not the other's, the question doesn't run. The questions reach across the policy areas that decide most races: the economy, healthcare, safety, the environment, how government works and education. The mix inside those areas follows what the record in that race supports. Most are questions where the candidates disagree, because those tell you the most; a few are places where they agree.

Every question has to be answered. There's no skipping, so every result in a race rests on the same full set of questions, and nobody's result is tilted by what they chose to leave out. A few questions near the start ask about you rather than about an issue, such as your ZIP code, which tells us your state. They play a small part in your result and are kept apart from the policy areas.

The questions, their order and their topics can change as the record changes.



Screen 3 shows a question card from a Senate race.

3 Each candidate is scored on their own

Your match with one candidate never depends on your match with another. When you finish, we score every candidate in the matchup against your answers separately.

On each question, a candidate earns credit when your answer lines up with their recorded position. Questions don't all carry the same weight: one that truly divides the candidates in that race counts for more than one where they mostly agree, and the weight shifts a little with how much that issue tends to matter in your state. Your match with a candidate is the credit they earned out of the credit available, shown as a percentage.

Here's the arithmetic on a made-up race between Alvarez and Brooks, with a quiz of three questions and a reader who answers Yes, No, Yes.

Question	Weight	Reader	Alvarez earns	Brooks earns
Cap property tax increases?	3	Yes	3 (also Yes)	0 (No)
Expand Medicaid?	2	No	0 (Yes)	2 (also No)
Ban phones in classrooms?	1	Yes	1 (also Yes)	1 (also Yes)
Total of 6 available			4, a 67% match	3, a 50% match

The first question carries the most weight because it's the one that pulls these two candidates furthest apart. Both earn credit on the third because both agree with the reader. Real quizzes have more questions and finer weights; the arithmetic is the same.

Your report shows more than the percentage. It breaks the match down by policy area so you can see where you and a candidate line up and where you part ways, and you can move between every candidate in the matchup.

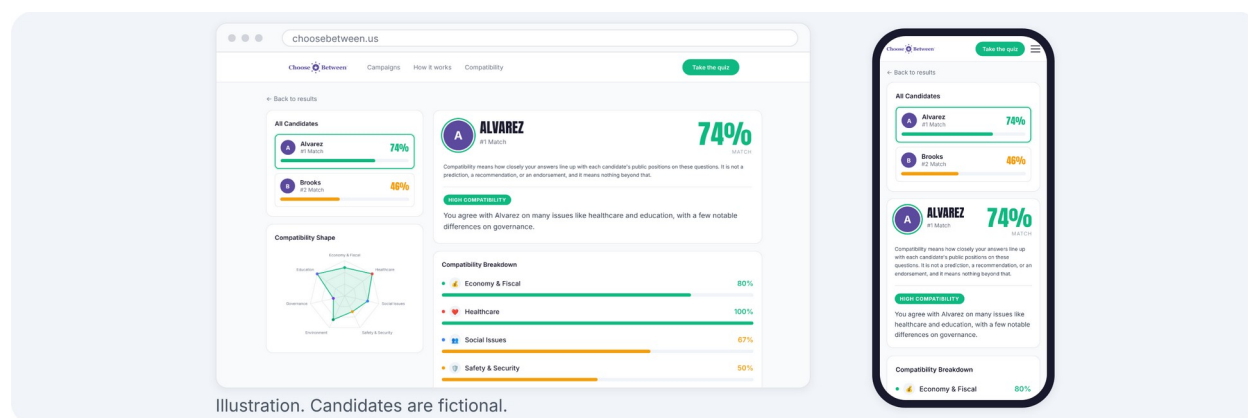


Illustration. Candidates are fictional.

Screen 4 shows the Compatibility Report with the breakdown.

4 A match is a comparison, not a recommendation

Your result shows how closely your answers line up with a candidate's public positions on the questions we asked. That's the whole claim. It isn't advice on how to vote. How you vote is your decision. You probably care about things our questions don't reach, and we hope you read widely before you decide.

Nor is a result a prediction of how you or anyone else will vote, or a guess at who'll win. Featuring a candidate isn't an endorsement, and neither is a high match. The counts and charts around the site are calculated from quiz responses and public data; they aren't polls or forecasts, and they don't measure public opinion. There are no right answers, and nobody is being graded.

A high match doesn't mean you and a candidate agree on everything, and a low one doesn't mean you disagree on everything. The quiz covers a limited set of issues, and it can't tell you how strongly a candidate holds a view, how they'd trade one priority against another, or what they'd do in office. Your result depends entirely on what you answered. It's produced automatically, and it isn't a statement or an opinion from us about you or about any candidate. Because each race has its own questions and weights, results from different races, or from the same race on different days, can't be compared. We keep improving how results are calculated.

5 Your answers stay yours

We never ask your name, and we can't connect your answers to you.

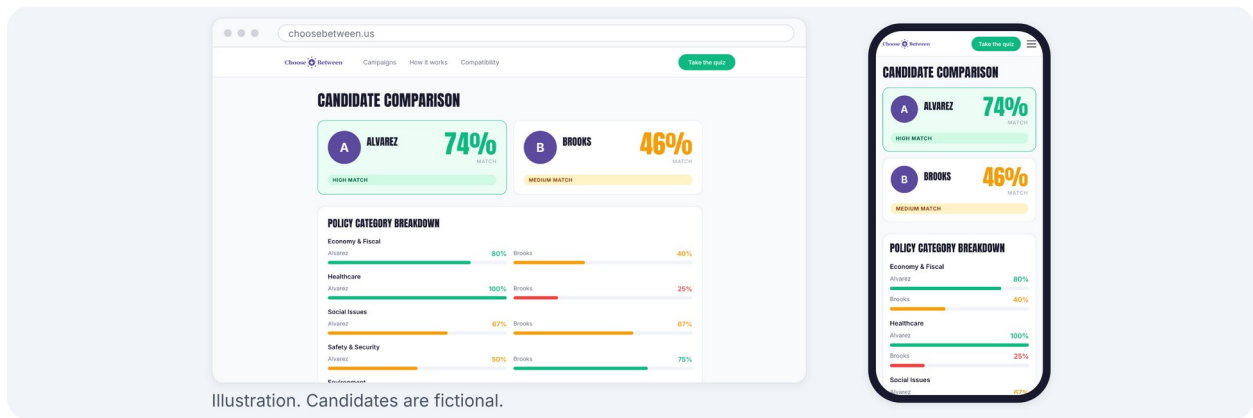
Your answers are tied to a random code stored in a cookie in your browser. Clear the cookie and they're gone from your browser; we can't bring them back, and we can't find them for you either, because nothing links them to a person. Combined with many other people's, your answers become anonymous totals: how a race's matches are splitting, which way that split is moving, how people in a state lean on an issue. Those totals feed the figures on the site and the data products we offer to media organizations and campaigns. They're never small enough to point at anyone, and no client ever sees an individual's answers.

We don't sell personal information and we don't share it for targeted advertising. Sharing a result is your choice, and anyone you share it with can pass it on. The Privacy Policy is the full account; if it and this document ever differ, the policy wins.

6 Independent, by design

Choose Between is free, and it's independent. Nobody involved in running the site works for, is paid by or is affiliated with any candidate, campaign, party, committee or interest group. Three things pay for the site, and none of them can touch the questions, the positions, how results are calculated, the figures we publish or how we handle corrections.

The first is paid political advertising. Those ads are labeled "Paid political advertisement" and kept apart from candidate positions and from your results. Every buyer of a paid position in a race is offered the same terms, and we review each ad before it runs. The second is sponsored content that isn't political, labeled as sponsored. The third is the data products described above, sold under terms that forbid any attempt to identify anyone. An ad on the site isn't an endorsement from us, and it doesn't mean the advertiser endorses us.



Screen 5 shows the Compare page, with both candidates side by side.

7 We keep the record current

Candidates change their minds, sources move, and new statements land after we publish. We work to keep positions accurate and current, but we can't promise every one is complete or up to date at every moment, so check the linked source before you lean on it.

If you spot a problem, use "Request a correction" on any candidate profile and tell us the race, the candidate, the position you think is wrong and a public source that supports the change. Readers, candidates and campaigns are all welcome; campaigns should write from an official address. Once a correction checks out, we update the page and usually add a dated note saying what changed. If a candidate disagrees with a position that's accurately sourced, we may add a dated note from them beside it rather than remove it. We don't take down an accurate, sourced position because someone asks, though a candidate can raise it again with a new source while the race is live.

One level down: how the weights work

For readers who want the mechanics, this is the part Principle 3 leaves out.

Every question starts with a base weight that reflects how important its issue is in general. For each race, we adjust it twice. The larger adjustment comes from how sharply the question divides the featured candidates: clearly opposite positions are worth more than positions that land close together, because they tell you more about the choice in front of you. The smaller adjustment reflects how much that issue tends to matter in the state where the race is run. The adjusted weights apply the same way to every candidate.

Questions are grouped into policy areas, and the credit a candidate earns inside each area is the category breakdown in your report. The overall percentage is the credit earned across every question divided by the credit available, so an area with more questions or heavier weights moves the overall number more. The questions about you are kept apart from the policy areas, so the policy picture stays clean.

Who we are and how to reach us

Choose Between, LLC is a small, independent company in Colorado. The matching technology came from an unlikely place: our team first built it for relationship apps, where the job was measuring how well two people fit, and elections turned out to be the same shape of problem. We built the site because long ballots leave a lot of people deciding with less information than they'd like, and we'd rather you walk in knowing where you stand.

Questions and suggestions go through the Contact page at choosebetween.us. To flag a candidate position, use "Request a correction" on that candidate's profile. The Terms of Use cover what you agree to when you use the site; the Privacy Policy covers everything we collect and what we never do with it.

Choose Between is non-partisan and not affiliated with any candidate or party. Results are informational, **not voting advice**.

Choose Between
choosebetween.us

When Choice Matters. Choose Between.™