

**Watchmen Voter Guide for Legislative District #5 State Senator**  
*\* Click on each candidate's name to see their completed questionnaire \**

	<a href="#">Carl Bjerke</a>	Peter Riggs
<b>1.</b> What is your name, what office are you running for and why are you running for this position?	<p>My name is Carl Bjerke and I am running for Senate, District 5.</p> <p>Although it has been my intent to use my time, post fire service retirement, to find a new area of service, nothing has motivated me more to this end than the past two years. I am now convinced serving in politics is my new charge. What happened in our government is unprecedented. For the first time in my 59-years, as a citizen of this great country, did I feel completely betrayed by all levels and branches of government. The response to the pandemic was a coordinated farse intended to control the populous and to greatly diminish our liberties; a very short history is already proving this out. I was wrong to think that all our conservative Republicans would have the courage to see this for what it was and to represent accordingly. I hold all branches of the Idaho government equally responsible and although there were some lone courageous voices, I am not convinced that many members of the Senate are of that group. Unfortunately, when most people are thinking that we are coming out on the other side of this continued debacle, there are people, like nurses and first responders, to name a couple, losing their jobs due to continued mandates. The very people who stood in the breach and between the virus and the public's safety and care, are now disposable for political expedience. For this reason and for the complete lack of candor and contrition exhibited by our elected officials, in the face of the lives they allowed to be destroyed and continue to do so, I am compelled to enter into this race. The preceding was definitely a big part of my motivation, but in general, I am entering this race because I am intent on leading from a Godly perspective, with hopes of making a true difference in the lives of Idahoans.</p>	<b>Declined to Respond</b>
<b>2.</b> When do you believe life begins and how does this belief affect the legislation you will support?	<p>Life begins at conception. I will take every opportunity to support any bill that either incrementally further protects the unborn, or any more sweeping change that puts this state and this country in the position of respecting the right to life of our most precious resource. The 2022 Legislative session brought forth bills that address this issue, some are still in committee. One of particular interest, and as an example of a bill I would be supporting, is HR019 that urges the Supreme Court to reverse its jurisprudence on abortion and instead recognize the authority of the state of Idaho to apply state laws to protect every human being from fertilization to natural death.</p>	<b>Declined to Respond</b>
<b>3.</b> What are the top three issues that you feel the legislature needs to address?	<p>1) Maintain confidence in the election process – It is disappointing to see the low numbers of voter turnout. Our republican form of government requires the people – (of the people, by the people, for the people) to participate in the system. If there is any question in our future elections that our system of voting is not secure, we can expect a greater level of apathy, with corresponding low voter turnout. The very existence of what we hold dear in our country, the right to vote and to have that vote count, is in jeopardy of being lost. For example, a study conducted by the Heritage Foundation listed Idaho as being ranked 38h in voter integrity. There has been some progress made regarding this issue, but there is more need to fully secure Idaho's voting integrity.</p> <p>2) A society will ultimately be the judge on how it takes care of the most vulnerable. I believe it should be a priority to move forward new and existing proposed legislation that will protect our most precious resource, the unborn and the children of Idaho. The future of this great state will lie in our desire and ability to secure the rights and freedoms of our next generation. Although some headway is being made on these fronts, we will need to work on</p>	<b>Declined to Respond</b>

	<p>firming up additional legislation that will protect the rights of the unborn, eliminate the indoctrination of our school children, get back to traditional Idaho values, reverse the physical and psychological effects of mask mandates, and end the sexualization of our children through pornographic materials in curriculum and libraries. I know these can be lightning rod issues, but they shouldn't be. I am convinced that if more people really knew the extent of these issues, we would have a groundswell of support for making changes.</p> <p>3) Deviation from the intent of our founding documents, in all its forms, has a disastrous effect on the people of Idaho. Article IV, Section 4 of the US Constitution guarantees every State in the Union a Republican form of Government, where the sovereignty of the state resides with the people. A republican form of government respects all the tenets of the rule of law which include supremacy of the law, equality before the law and the principle of liberty. What happened in the response to the COVID pandemic in Idaho was completely lawless-everything from illegally extending emergency orders and mandates, to forbidding proper governance by preventing the ability of the Legislature to convene and represent the electorate. Much work will need to take place in the 2023 legislative session to ensure nothing like this ever happens again in the state of Idaho. In regards to our founding documents, I believe in our 2nd Amendment rights to bear arms, and this right should not ever be infringed upon.</p>	
<p><b>4.</b> What do you consider the biggest health care issue for Idaho, and where do you stand on it?</p>	<p>Unfortunately, there are many issues related to health care, in Idaho and across the country. But I believe the overarching issue lies in medical care / hospital funding, whether from Medicare or Medicaid or other 3rd party payers; the more we lose local and private control of our medical system, the more we will be subject to the whims of those holding the purse strings. I believe doctors should have the freedom and ability to make proper patient decisions, without the many bureaucratic levels of regulation. We saw this ploy with federally mandated vaccine requirements – our hospitals followed suit in order to maintain their funding. It is a tragic situation, especially for medical providers who no longer have jobs, because of the mandates.</p>	<p><b>Declined to Respond</b></p>
<p><b>5.</b> Idaho's school system has a lot of room for improvement, how would you legislate to improve K-12 education in Idaho?</p>	<p>I would legislate to provide for more local control of the Idaho education system. We have suffered greatly, not just in Idaho from failed federal programs that I feel are designed to create an equal level of mediocrity among our children: Common Core, No Child Left Behind, etc. We need to separate our system and get back to achievement related education and recognizing exceptionalism. We need to get back to basics and emphasize reading, writing and arithmetic. I would also legislate and advocate for school choice; making it easier for charter schools to be approved; and, to have funding following the student.</p>	<p><b>Declined to Respond</b></p>

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<b>6.</b> Do you support or oppose legislation to prohibit gender reassignment treatment/surgery on minors?	I support legislation to prohibit gender reassignment treatment / surgery on minors. We do much to protect minors from many other encroachments on their safety and wellbeing. We should afford the same opportunity in this case; these decisions should be left to the individual who has reached adulthood.	<b>Declined to Respond</b>
<b>7.</b> If elected, how will you ensure that you are aligned with your North Idaho constituents' values and how your voting record will reflect those values?	I am big believer in following established policy and standard operating guidelines. It should not be a mystery as to how I will align my values to my constituents. At the very least, I will espouse to support the tenets of the Idaho Republican Platform. Similarly, I will use these established documents as a guide to how I will legislate and vote.	<b>Declined to Respond</b>
<b>8.</b> What is your definition of marriage?	My definition of marriage is a contract / commitment, in front of God, between a man and a woman, for life.	<b>Declined to Respond</b>
<b>9.</b> In recent years, sexually explicit materials have invaded public schools and libraries. In your opinion are these materials appropriate for minors under 18 years old?	Absolutely not. If you understand that it is no accident that these types of materials are coming into play, you also understand that we must do everything in our collective power to stop it.	<b>Declined to Respond</b>
<b>10.</b> What is your opinion regarding freedom of choice for parents for the education of their children, for example School choice?	I believe that the parents should be final arbiters of every decision that affects their children, education, especially. I am a firm believer in competition creating a rising level of efficiency and greater customer service. Having a monopoly in education has not provided the motivation to raise standards, etc. Giving parents school choice, will ultimately benefit all students, whether in the public school system or within an available alternative.	<b>Declined to Respond</b>

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<b>11.</b> Migration from other states has caused property taxes for current homeowners to substantially increase. What legislation would you recommend to prevent the property tax increases that are causing financial burden and forcing some owners out of their homes?	This is definitely a problem that needs to be addressed through property tax reform and a thorough study to find the most effective solution. I believe there is the legislative will to take this on, and I would support any reasonable legislation that would allow homeowners the ability maintain that ownership; it is very important for individuals / families, to be the homeowners v. large corporations. As for potential legislation, I can see some type of rollback on assessed values – prior to the migratory increases, with a similar to prop 13 type taxation that puts a freeze or limit to increases.	<b>Declined to Respond</b>
<b>12.</b> In your opinion, should the House of Representatives and the Senate have their own attorney/legal representation apart from the Attorney General?	The Attorney General and assigned legal staff work for the people of Idaho. They cannot do this, if they feel their job is to work for the executive branch, primarily. So, yes, the representatives of the people should have their own legal representation. Off the top of my head, I believe the legal staff of the AGs office is around 120 attorneys. I would suggest the majority of those attorneys be assigned to represent the legislature.	<b>Declined to Respond</b>
<b>13.</b> In recent years some groups have advocated for legalizing marijuana in our state, do you support or oppose the legalization of marijuana? Why or why not?	This is an issue I could write a book about and is usually not very adaptable to a yes or no response. But, as I sit here now, I am not in favor of legalizing marijuana in our state. On the other hand, I am also a big proponent of less government and for retaining as many of our freedoms as possible. Just being very honest here – this is a sticky wicket, when you measure it against those factors. If anything, if I had the ability to make a reasonable compromise, I would lean more toward decriminalization of recreational use, as I feel there are many more serious offenses on the books that we seem to look the other way on. I generally feel that the war on drugs, especially as it pertains to marijuana, was a battle that may have, in some ways, created more problems than it solved.	<b>Declined to Respond</b>

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<p><b>14.</b> What is your background and why do you believe it qualifies you for this position?</p>	<p>My qualifications lie in the fact that I am a citizen of this great nation and resident of Idaho in District 5. My previous 32-year fire service work experience and 15-years of administrative assignments will help me greatly in understanding issues related to the proper administration of local and state government. I have had many opportunities to work closely with city and county governments and private sector entities. This includes health districts, private hospitals, and other jurisdiction's police and fire departments. I feel that my leadership style and my cooperative demeanor has led to accomplishing the work I was charged to perform.</p> <p>One of my fire department assignments was serving as the Division Chief of Support Services. Part of my job involved supervision of the City's Emergency Manager, supervision of the Educational Coordinator, coordination of volunteer groups such as Disaster Communication Services (DCS) and the Emergency Volunteer Air Corp (EVAC). Working with these groups provided invaluable experience in addressing stakeholder needs and coordinating the government functions related to activities within the city. Later in my career, I worked with city staff in planning the LA Marathon as the event's Plans Section Chief. In that capacity I coordinated the city's efforts with all other jurisdictional partners and conducted meetings and operational briefings.</p> <p>My experiences, although not directly related to a political position, provided me ample opportunity, through my thirty-two-year career, to work closely with city administrative staff and various political entities to facilitate proper public safety governance. My ability to make difficult decisions, after taking into account all available input and doing so with the intent of, just doing what is right, will assist me greatly, as I represent and serve the great State of Idaho and particularly, my constituents in senate district 5.</p>	<p><b>Declined to Respond</b></p>