FIQH OF ELECTIONS

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With 2024 US elections drawing nearer, we present this one-pager as a resource providing Islamic guidance - rooted in the Quran and Sunnah - for American Muslims regarding political participation.

1. There are three verses of the Quran that are foundational to Islamic Politics: Q.4:58 emphasizes trust and responsibility, and the importance of justice. Q.4:59 stresses thar Muslims should act in conformance to the Quran and Sunnah. Q.3:104 establishes the duty of Muslims to enjoin good and forbid evil.
2. A Muslim is allowed to live in any country, provided they can practice their religion and raise their children with Islamic beliefs and values. The Prophet ﷺ allowed Ja`far to remain in Abyssinia (a Christian land) even after the Muslim polity was set up in Madinah. However, if the Muslim lacks this freedom, they are required to move to a place where they would have that freedom (see Q.4:97-100).
3. God's commandments and rulings have supreme importance for Muslims. If any law, policy, or practice in the land we live in is contradictory to what God has commanded, then our hearts do not accept it, nor can we campaign for it, although we do not break the law of the land through our actions. If the law interferes with our basic freedom of religion, then #2 would become applicable.
4. Participation by a Muslim in elections in the US (whether on the federal, state, or municipal level) is permissible, provided the Muslim does not have to compromise on any Islamic beliefs or values, if the intention includes one or more of the following:
   - Cooperation for the greater good
   - Helping to fulfill the rights of our neighbors (both Muslims and others)]
   - Helping to achieve the lesser of two evils in cases where there is no better alternative
   - Conveying Muslim concerns to leadership, and helping to secure and defend Muslim rights
   - Advising and speaking truth to power; enjoining good and forbidding evil.
5. Muslims should remember the importance of placing trust in God (tawakkul), and behave with the dignity and morality appropriate to a Muslim. Muslim should not humiliate themselves before created beings and should remember that Allah in control. Nothing can happen unless Allah allows it, and often Allah leaves humans to face the consequences of their choices.
6. Political experts tell us that there is value in registering to vote even if one does not actually vote, because it allows candidates to see the voting power of the Muslim bloc. Furthermore, voting is not only about choosing a president; there are other questions on the ballot where Muslims can vote according to Islamic convictions and values. The decision to vote on a particular issue is a personal decision that a Muslim should take after due thought and praying for guidance, if preponderant good would result.
7. Fatwas to this general effect have been issued by American and European fiqh councils.

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And Allah knows best.

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