



Coastal Carolina Taxpayers Association Candidate Vetting Interview Summary

Interview questions were developed by a Vetting Committee of 10 members of the Coastal Carolina Taxpayers Association. All candidates for a particular office were asked the same questions. Interviews were conducted by 3 rotating members of the Vetting Committee. Summaries are the agreed-upon consensus of each 3-member group. Candidates were asked to interview in-person, but phone interviews were offered for candidates living outside Craven County if schedules would not allow travel.

George Cleveland, Candidate for NC House, District 14 Interview Date: October 7, 2014 Interviewed: By Phone

Name: George Cleveland

Phone: 910-346-3866 (home)

Email: gmclev@earthlink.net

Address: 224 Campbell Place, Jacksonville, North Carolina

Occupation: Retired from Marine Corps, school teaching, & 4 years in Department of State

Age: 75

Educational Background:

- BS in Mathematics Education from University of Maryland in College Park, Maryland

Memberships and Associations:

- NRA
- Fleet Reserve Association
- American Legion
- NCOA (Non-Commissioned Officers Association)
- Veterans of Foreign Wars

Tell us about your personal interests, and does your family understand the time required to serve as a Representative in the NC House , and do they support your candidacy?

I'm married and have 4 children. I like to fish, but am not doing much of it lately. I got into politics in the early 90s, and it's been downhill for fishing since then.

Since I've served in the House, my wife fully understands. In fact, this summer I've begun to feel she'd like the General Assembly to be back in session so that she can do more of the pottering around town she likes to do on her own. (This was said with a smile in his voice.)

Why are you running for NC House? How is your campaign structured? Do you have experience campaigning and fund raising?

I want to help make North Carolina a conservative state. North Carolina funding was \$3 million dollars short when the Republican Party took over. We are already on a much sounder basis. The \$3 million dollar short-fall has been made up. We've got the unemployment insurance debt scheduled to be paid off much sooner. We've instituted tax reform that puts us in a much better position.

Doug Raymond is my campaign manager. Doug and my wife and I are pretty much "it" for my "campaign staff."

What are your values and core beliefs, and how would you use them to implement the CCTA mission statement?

I'm not familiar with CCTA's mission statement.

Upon being given Raynor's 'elevator speech' version – "We at CCTA espouse lower taxes, smaller government, adherence to the Constitution, freeing up the free enterprise system, and personal freedom with personal responsibility," George said, "It sounds like me; those are things I favor."

The idea that government can solve all of everyone's problems is just stupid, but government continues to grow because people clamor for it.

Discuss an ethical dilemma you faced. What happened? How did you resolve it?

I haven't had any. I simply do what I believe is right. I don't think anyone can truthfully say, "You said this, but you did that." I do what I say I'll do. If someone disagrees with me, I discuss it with them- try to change their mind if I still feel I'm right.

What in your background qualifies you to serve as a Representative in the NC House?

Twenty-five years in the Marine Corps honed leadership skills. My first term was a vertical learning curve though. Once I got things figured out, things went more smoothly.

Have you ever owned or managed a business?

Yes, I currently have a part-time business. We sell synthetic lubricants and related products such as grease, gear lubes, and synthetic 2 cycle engine oil.

Where do individual rights come from? Do individuals have rights that cannot be repealed or restrained by human law? If so, what are those rights?

From God.

Yes.

The right to the pursuit of happiness, to live life as you want to.

What is the purpose of government?

To provide infrastructure, and security, and to do things that individuals can't do for themselves like building roads and providing a police force.

Government should be minimal, not a gargantuan monster. I'm troubled by the government's being in health care, but I don't think we'll be able to get rid of it.

Where does an elected representative get his/her authority?

Authority comes from law, but in using it, I represent my constituents.

Where would you get the authority to spend tax money on a specific project?

The authority is in the law. I don't remember voting for any taxes [increases]. I may have in a situation where it was hidden in a bill about something else. Anyway, I don't have the authority as an individual; it comes from law and the state constitution.

What is your view on your prescribed role as a NC House Member?

My role is to represent my constituents. If a lot of people are excited about something, I'd better get excited about it, too.

If one person is excited about something, I need to alleviate that person's concerns.

What is your view on the role of the Constitution as a guide for governmental action? How would you go about enhancing or reducing the role of the Constitution in government?

It is not a “guide;” the Constitution should be the basis of everything we do. However, it is constantly being cut, torn, and abused. The exact opposite should happen. It should be enhanced, but unfortunately since the mid 60s, liberal courts have discovered they can get what they want through judicial fiat.

What is your opinion on the use of Executive Orders by a Chief Executive?

They should be used sparingly, as in an emergency. It can be an occasional useful tool for a Governor, but not as a way to get what the governor wants. Two sessions ago, I was able to negate an executive order by Beverly Purdue.

Do you believe our immigration system is broken? If so, how would you address this?

Yes. It’s been broken since 1986. That’s why we have the mess we have.

We should close the borders, and send them home. Congress and the President have been ignoring the law. If it were in my power, I would close the borders and send the illegals we can find back home. And the way I look at it, we can find every cow in the United States, so why can’t we find every illegal?

How do you communicate with your constituents?

If they want to talk to me, my constituents know how to find me. I don’t do regular newsletters, maybe one a quarter.

Do you believe entitlement spending is about right, too much, or too little?

It’s about 80% too much. If we have to have entitlements, it should be at the subsistence level to encourage the people using it to go out and find a job. And the family and the church should be involved *first* before the government gets involved.

My position on Obamacare is that we should get rid of it. However, my feeling is, that it is so bad, it will collapse on it’s own.

What do you know about Common Core? What is your position on it, and why?

It stinks. It is a plan to have a federal curriculum throughout the states. It was built in secret, and sold as something it wasn’t. Over the next 18 months to 2 years, I’m hopeful it’ll be gone from North Carolina. I believe we have a good start on eliminating it and will completely opt out of it in the next legislative session.

What do you know about the National Defense Authorization Act?

I haven’t read the act. I only know what I read in the paper, and some of what I read is disturbing, but I’m not following it closely.

Where does the authority come from to enforce gun laws, control gun ownership, or to register gun owners or their firearms?

The Second Amendment doesn't say anything about gun control, registering gun owners or their firearms. The movement to control guns started in the late 1930s when a few people convinced others they would be safer without guns, but the truth is an armed citizenry is a polite citizenry. If you take away guns from law abiding citizens, you make us less safe.

Tell us what you know about the origin of the concept of "Separation of Church and State."

There is no such thing. It's a man-made idea that started in the 20s. It is a distortion of the First Amendment. It is not valid because it is *not* what the Constitution says.

What are your thoughts about our Energy Policies in America?

They are designed to assure the collapse of America. The federal government is demonizing coal, which is the cheapest source we have, and it is standing in the way of oil drilling. We solved the "acid rain" problem with coal in the 70s, and we're behaving as if it still exists. The agenda is to make us a 3rd world nation. If the Department of Energy at the state and federal levels went away tomorrow, no one would miss them.

Leadership has been described as a process of social influence in which one person can enlist others in the accomplishment of a common goal. What have you done that would show your leadership abilities?

I started in the Marine Corps as a private and finished as a master gunnery sergeant. Leadership is an innate quality, but it can be grown and enhanced. People should get out in front and lead, or get out of the way.

If elected, what would be your number one priority or agenda item during your next term in office?

I don't have an agenda, but I do have some unfinished business, and illegal alien laws will be one of my main areas of focus. I will do what I can to restrict illegal aliens from taking advantage of the taxpayers of North Carolina.

This interview was conducted by Brad Cummings, Hal James, and Raynor James.