Active Policy Reflection

A method for making more confident voting decisions on ballot measures and propositions

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What characterizes the authentic voting experience on change proposals?

- Excessively technical summaries without big picture/context
- Manipulative, confusing pro/con arguments

Yet, you are asked to vote on them anyway! That's just the way it is.

Voting is a high stakes LEAP OF FAITH

More information would be helpful, but either it's not available or you don't have enough time or interest to get it.

Even if you had all the information in the world, you might still be perplexed, because voting is not just about information. It is also about being true to your values and clear about your interests.

It is easy to get intimidated by pro/con arguments, because the writers of these arguments know that guilt can be an effective motivator
- "A vote against this school bond measure is a vote against kids."
- "A vote for background checks at gun shows is a vote against gun owners' rights."

With some voters, you may share values and interests, but with others, you may be in competition.
- Values: health care is a right, life begins at conception, all people should be allowed to marry regardless of gender, welfare builds dependency, etc.
- Interests: Who is going to benefit from this re-zoning, or from this tax, or from this regulation, etc.

But it's not the only one

- What college should I go to?

- What job should I take?

- Who should I marry?

- Where should I live?

- Etc…

APR scaffolds voter decision-making on measures and propositions as a SKILL

SKILLS:
- Recognizing that at best, voting requires…
  - a critical read of what others are claiming
  - not being a slave to pre-made pro con arguments (you can make up your own!)
  - weighing the pros and cons using…
    - whatever information is available, even though it is likely to be incomplete
    - self-awareness about your values and interests

- Making individual voting decisions with confidence
- Sharing perspectives and respectfully deliberating on the measures in satisfying group contexts

What are the Active Policy Reflection (APR) steps for a more satisfying position-talking experience?

Step 7. Choose your final position - yay or nay.

Step 6. Sharpen your analysis via respectful group discussion.

Step 5. Apply your values and interests to an analysis of its worth.

Step 4. Identify what the proponents see as the "solution."

Step 3. Identify what the proponents see as the "problem" that the measure/proposition is supposed to be addressing.

Step 2. Identify the topic.

Step 1. Read the measure/proposition and pro/con arguments.