

Published: 08.12.2005

Young Voices: Political parties?

Question: How do you define yourself politically? Do you think political parties represent young people's concerns? Do you belong to one?

Politically I define myself as a free-thinker. I find that a bipartisan system in the United States is out of date and more political parties should be established. Americans have so many different ideas, morals and concerns that two parties are unable to represent all citizens. I do not belong to just one party, though I tend to swing in one direction more than the other, because I would like to keep my options open. I do not like to limit myself to one set of ideals and in turn be shut out from the other point of view. Many people vote along party lines simply because they are registered with that particular party, but that does not always mean it is the right decision. One must explore the issues and determine the best person for the job based on their positions, not because they are labeled Democrat or Republican.

Victoria Harben, 19

University of Arizona

My political philosophy is that of a faithful citizen. I believe-as says the scripture-that all people must have their basic needs met; we are all responsible to guarantee access to education, health care and a decent standard of living for everyone. Unfortunately, neither Republicans nor Democrats represent these concerns. Self-proclaimed liberals long ago turned their back on the masses of working poor that occupy America's ghettos. Conservatives claim to represent the common person, "Joe Six Pack" or the "Soccer Mom," if you will. They champion the anti-abortion cause and claim to be righteous Christians, yet cut taxes for the rich at every opportunity while turning a blind eye to the 45 million Americans that live without access to quality health care. Politicians that occupy both sides of the aisle promote international trade policy that reflects their primary concerns: profit-maximization and self-indulgence. Therefore, I register Independent and vote my conscience.

Jacob Cortes, 23

Intern Pima County Interfaith Council

Politically, I have no definition for myself. I'm sure there's some political party that shares my views, but so far I don't know about it. I try to keep out of politics, so I also try to keep from labeling myself as a Republican, Democrat, or any other party's member. I label myself as a free-thinking American, no fancy name for that one.

Really, at this age, all I can do is talk about politics. I can talk until my face turns blue, but no one will really take me seriously given my young age. I can't really act on politics, so there's no reason to align myself with a certain group. Once I turn 18 I'll align myself with one, but that will take place behind the cover of a voting booth.

Thomas Taccone, 15

Presidio High School

To define oneself politically can be a difficult task. It seems that even the political parties are split themselves - moderate, conservative, left-wing, far-right, etc. As young as I am, I define myself as politically experimental. I am still trying to decide about some issues. I am absorbing the facts that are presented to me from both sides and

looking at how those facts contrast or complement my personal views. I do not believe that any of the political parties wholly represent young people. Some of the parties are too set against change, or are too willing to change with modern times. I call myself a Democrat, and I vote Democrat. But if a Republican, independent or some other candidate has views that fit what I believe, I will vote for that person over the Democratic candidate.

Courtney C. Johnson, 19

University of Arizona

I am a gun-toting, Bible-believing, politically and economically conservative individual who thinks that even President Bush is too liberal. I'm convinced that the major political parties are too busy quibbling over their partisan ideals to be truly mindful of my concerns. But for the sake of argument and given the popular choices, I would have to align myself with the Republican Party.

I have resigned myself to the fact that the chances of a candidate I completely agree with successfully running for office are none to none. I know I will not be able to claim allegiance to a political party and/or individual that is truly worthy of my devotion until I am under the governance of Jesus Christ in eternity. Until then, I will just have to join conservatives and liberals alike and continue to settle for whom I believe to be the lesser of the evils.

David Liapis, 22

U.S. Air Force

Are you are a Republican or a Democrat? This is actually one of the questions that I dread the most. My voter identification card says one thing, but I often times find myself siding with the other party. I am torn between the two, unsure which is more in line with my opinions and ideals.

So here I stand, at a fork in the road. I go a little one way, then I hit a hill and turn back. Perhaps I am destined to stand at the junction - after all, I know that I am not the only one here.

Crystal N. Brown , 21

University of Arizona

Most teenagers would probably say they are more liberal than conservative and I am no different. On the political spectrum, I fall on the left side. I tend to like change in our government and I also am for things like gay marriages and abortion rights.

I cannot register to vote yet as I am not 18, but even if I could I would not register with the Democratic Party. I realize that when I am older my feelings towards government views my change because as people get older they tend to grow more conservative, so I will register as an independent.

Erin Gaines, 17

Presidio High School

Although I do consider myself as being represented somewhat better by one party than the other, I would prefer not to let such representations define me politically. The key to success in politics is a willingness to adapt to any obstacles or opportunities that may present themselves, which sometimes requires the alteration of one's views, or even the creation of new ones. To define oneself inflexibly by the beliefs of any one party is to limit oneself mentally and politically, and can even lead to bias and prejudice. And as for the representation of young people's concerns, it seems it is only a few individuals, never entire parties, who are ever able to adequately address those issues most important to young Americans.

Angela Poulson, 21

University of Arizona

At the age I'm at right now, I don't think I can really define how I feel politically. I don't think that I have reached that point in my life where I really know what I stand for when it comes to politics. I am constantly fed the views of my parents, so I guess I tend to take after them. Then again, I know almost nothing about the opposing views so I can't really say where I stand. I haven't yet begun to realize that what goes on in the government affects me personally. I mean, I am told it impacts me and somewhere in my mind I know it does, but I have yet to personally see the direct impacts on my life. I know sooner or later I will have to learn about politics but right now I am quite content knowing nothing at all.

Paige Salzbrenner, 17**Presidio High School**

I suppose I could define myself as part of three different parties: Republican, Democrat and Bull Moose. What I believe or do not believe in is not determined by which group is endorsing it, but by my own observations, research and beliefs.

It is true that children and young adults are influenced politically by those around them. But it is more accurate to say that even though we are influenced, we can still form our own unique opinions. No party would be able to encompass our beliefs nor represent us.

Kathleen Conti, 16**Canyon del Oro High School**

The youth shouldn't belong to a political party because they are not adults. They can have their own opinions on what they think should happen, but they shouldn't decide which party they belong to until they actually are of adult age. Politics are complicated and confusing things that the youth shouldn't be too involved in.

The youth should not commit to a party if they are unable to vote. Propaganda and the media provide lots of information on politics that the youth of America should not get too involved in. I don't belong to a political party because I feel that I don't know much about the subject. I also can't change anything until I'm 18. I also think that most kids feel exactly the same way I feel about political parties.

Catherine Harris, 16**Presidio High School**

All content copyright © 1999-2005 AzStarNet, Arizona Daily Star and its wire services and suppliers and may not be republished without permission. All rights reserved. Any copying, redistribution, or retransmission of any of the contents of this service without the expressed written consent of Arizona Daily Star or AzStarNet is prohibited.