

A Generic Comparison of Party Platforms, Policies, and Practices

You Do The Research – You Decide

This unique presentation of Generic Party Platforms is an effort to get people thinking about their own values and their own view of the world and how it should impact their choices when it comes to their civic involvement.

This comparison chart is an attempt to shed light in a simple fashion on the prevailing views within each of the two major US political parties. Naturally, not everyone in a party will hold exactly the views that are stated for each issue or policy area, especially in this abbreviated two page version. (Extended version can be downloaded at www.USCivicsTraining.org)

How to Use this Chart

Read each of line and decide which position you most reflects your own. Determine which total set of ideas you are most aligned with and seek out the party that best represents those ideas. Exercise your civic duty to vote. Keep in mind if you make the choice not to vote, you still have made a choice, you are approving the status quo.

Topic	Party A	Party B
View of America and Constitutional Issues		
The Constitution	A living document that needs to change with the times.	A fixed charter of liberties whose main purpose is to restrain those who hold power.
The Courts	The Courts should actively re-interpret the Constitution, even setting out new policy prescriptions in their rulings.	The Courts are only to interpret the Constitution and not set out new policy in their rulings
Scope of Government	Should be used to bring about good in society and be involved in central planning and organizing.	Should be limited. At the end of the day, government is power and therefore should be restrained.
View of the founding of US	Founding was based on discrimination and privilege and the Founders ideas are no longer relevant..	Founding was based on transcendent truths and setting up a structure that would maximize liberty. Believe the founders ideas are still relevant today and should be studied.
View of America Today	Mixed – Good and Bad. America has done some good in the world – but has mainly been a problem in the world.	Has been a force for good in the world. The US. has flaws but has worked to overcome them.
View of Americans	America is a mosaic of different people groups and in diversity there is strength. Victimized groups need government help	E Pluribus Unum. “Out of the many, one.” That every American should ascribe to the American ideals of hard work and personal responsibility
Freedom of Religion	Freedom of Worship. A person can hold their beliefs in private or in their place of worship	A person can hold and live out their beliefs in their private and public life.
Separation of Church and State	Committed to propagating the idea that this phrase is in the Constitution and support those that do- ACLU, People for the American Way and others.	The phrase is not in the Constitution. The Constitutional principle is “Congress making a law that establishes a national religion”. Public expression of faith, is not the establishment of religion.
Freedom of Speech	Selective Freedom of Speech. Approved speech is tolerated. Non approved speech that is said to be offensive must be controlled by government or limited to free speech zones	Broader Freedom of speech. All ideas should be heard or tolerated whether offensive or not
Right to Bear Arms	If guns are highly regulated there would less guns in society and therefore less crime. Government should be the ultimate protector of its citizens.	An individual ultimately has the responsibility to protect themselves. Responsible gun ownership by law abiding citizens has been proven to reduce crime and homicide.
View of States	Administrative units of the federal government	Independent entities of self governing citizens that have responsibilities unique to them and not the federal government.
View of Social Issues		
Abortion	Abortion should be widely available and any restraints should be highly resisted. It is a right and should be a woman's choice. Life begins when the fetus can survive outside the womb. The unborn child is determinedly called a “fetus”.	Abortion should be limited. Should only be allowed in cases of rape, incest or when mother's life is in danger. A baby's heartbeat and brain waves can be detected at 6-7 weeks. A baby is genetically a human at conception. The unborn child is determinedly called a “baby”.
Family	Can be many things. Any two people or group of people who love each other can be considered a family	A nuclear family of a man and woman and the children they may have are the building blocks of society
Marriage	Marriage should be redefined to be available for any two or more people of any sex who love each other.	Marriage is between a man and a woman. Once it is redefined, it can continued to be redefined to mean anything.
Sex Education	Kids are going to have sex so they need to know about it at a young age and be taught by public officials in schools.	Children are the responsibility of the parent and the parents values need to be represented in their sex education.
Race Relations	Racism still exists today and it is institutionalized. African Americans are particularly the victims of this.	Racism exists in pockets. The country has come a long way and paid a steep price to address it's national shortcomings. People should be judged by the “content of their character not the color of their skin”
LGTBQ	The LGTBO movement is equal to the black civil rights movement. LGTBO people have been oppressed	The LGTBO movement is not the moral equivalent to the black civil rights movement. LGTBO people have huge power today and are driving religious expression from the public square.
View of Economic Issues		
Economics	The government plays a key role in guiding the economy with interest rates, stimulus, and other tools	The free markets know best and it is the most efficient way for resources to be allocated through “price discovery”

Minimum Wage	Minimum Wage needs to be raised to "a living wage" in order that adults can support themselves and others.	Minimum Wage laws deter the formation of entry level jobs where teenagers and others can gain their first work experience
Government Spending	Government spending is important, needs to be increased to stimulate the economy and to support social programs.	Government spending should be controlled, the size of national debt is an issue & will be a burden on future generations.
Taxes	Highly Supportive of "Progressive Income Tax" where the more you make the more you pay in taxes. .	Generally supportive of making tax rates more equal so people are motivated to grow in their wage earning, keep more of what they make.
Welfare	Various groups have been victimized or fallen on hard luck over time and the government should be a key player in supporting them.	Individuals and families do get victimized and fall on hard luck. The best safety net is extended family, local churches, religious groups, and community non-profits. Govt is safety net of last resort. Short term.
View of National Concerns		
Education Administration	Should be centralized, starting with strong direction and control from the Dept of Education	Should be de-centralized and under local community control. Local parents and teachers know best.
Environment	Man-made global warming has been 100% confirmed by science and that it has fatal consequences for entire world.	Climate change goes through cycles that last decades and centuries. Man's role in affecting climate change is unproven and computer models have been proven incorrect and politicized.
Foreign Policy	The United States has been too big a player on the world stage in dictating terms to the world	The United States is in a unique position because of history and values to be a leader in the world
Health Care	Everybody should have healthcare and the government should be involved in making sure they get it. Government planning and control will reduce costs.	Everybody should be cared for and that free markets offer a better solution to lower cost and that the uninsured do have a safety net of hospitals and doctors that will care for them.
End of Life	Physical or emotional factors dictate that a persons quality of life does not meet personal or societal expectations, that doctors can be involved in "assisted suicide" and other life ending treatments.	A physicians role is to help support the individuals or families decision ,helping with pain management or withdrawal of life support. However, doctors "assisted suicide" compromises the medical profession.
Immigration	America is obligated to take in immigrants from other countries. Those that are in the country illegally should have some pathway to citizenship because it is the compassionate thing to do.	We are a nation of immigrants but this does not mean we are a nation of illegal immigration. Immigration laws should protect the rights of existing citizens and should be enforced. No blanket amnesty.
Military - National Defense	Too much money is spent on the military and could be spent on other things. If America is too strong, it can actually be too provocative on the global stage.	A strong military deters aggression. National Defense is one of the primary charges of the federal government.
National Sovereignty	The United States is not unique in all the world. We have been looked to as a world leader, but as global interconnectivity grows, the United States is moving to be more and more an equal peer with other nations.	The United States is a unique nation that is different than the rest of the nations of the world. We are a structured nation of principles and laws that offer maximum freedom and liberty, therefore our national sovereignty should be protected.
Recreational Drug Use	Marijuana should be legalized. It is no different than drinking alcohol in moderation. Govt can then regulate it and tax it.	Marijuana should not be legalized. It is different than alcohol. It is a gateway drug to other drugs.
Science	When science aligns with the political worldview of political leaders it should be funded and science and scientific experts can be used to set a political agenda.	Scientific debate is good and healthy. Science is not always unbiased and can be manipulated for political purposes.
Voting – Election Laws	Very opposed to voter ID laws saying they are intimidating and tend to suppress minority votes and therefore is a race issue.	Very Supportive of voter ID laws to provide for secure and legitimate elections. To not have voter ID is to invite election fraud.
View of Crime and Punishment		
Crime and Punishment	Some people groups are unfairly targeted or on a percentage basis are more likely to go to prison. Adjustments should be made in enforcement or in prosecution in order to make these percentages more equal.	Everyone person should be equal before the law and have a fair and speedy trial before a jury of their peers. The law should be applied equally to everyone
Hate Crime Legislation	Hate Crime legislation is needed and that motives can be determined by a court and a jury.	Hate crime legislation is a political invention and not needed. Judges and juries cannot look into a persons heart
Death Penalty	Generally opposed to it. Criminals need rehabilitation	Generally supportive of death penalty. Acts as a deterrent to other criminals to not commit violent crimes.
View of Miscellaneous Philosophical Items that Influence Policy		
Declaration of Independence	A document from the past. The concept of a Creator endowing individuals with rights is an antiquated idea	Still relevant, inspiring and true for today.
Life	Humans are a product of evolution.	Humans are unique and made in the image of God.
Where Rights Come From	Rights are provided by government and agreed upon by the people or agreed upon by political and culture leaders.	Inalienable Rights come from God and cannot be revoked by any government.
The Nature of Man	The Educated Classes are basically good and can be trusted with power to do good.	All of humankind has a flaw and cannot be trusted with power over his fellow man.
Rule of Law	The ends justify the means and the law can be bent or gotten around if there are important policy goals to achieve	The rule of law makes society stable, just and fair. To get to an end result it needs to fall under existing law or new laws need to be passed
Freedom	Freedom to live your life as you see fit. But also freedom from want and freedom from being offended.	Freedom to live your life as you see fit and to enjoy the results or suffer the consequences of your choice making.
Equality	Equality of outcomes, managed by the government.	Equality of opportunity, govt. protects peoples rights to have a fair opportunity to succeed.
Social Justice	Govt is involved in determining what social justice issues are and rectifying them.	Individuals and non-profits are involved in determining what social justice issues are and rectifying them.