

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.

There is so much marketing and sloganeering around political positions, it is hard to assess values are actually advanced by the parties. This comparison chart is an attempt to shed light on this in simple fashion. Naturally, not everyone in a party will hold exactly the views that are stated for each issue or policy area, but in general the majority of the people in that party maintain the views described based on their actions in office and the actual agenda they implement. These may or may not align with what an individual candidates says their positions are while campaigning.

How to Use this Chart

Read each of the lines and decide which position you most align with. Maybe even put a check mark in the box. Determine which set of ideas you are most aligned with overall and seek out the party that best represents those ideas and 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 saying you are okay with the other set of ideas being implemented.

Issue / Policy Area	Party A	Party B
View of America and Constitutional Issues		
The Constitution	A living document that needs to change with the times. General ideas can be applied, but ultimately it can be made to accommodate the desires of those holding power.	A fixed charter of liberties whose main purpose is to restrain those who hold power. Through checks and balances and enumerated powers the limits of government can be clearly understood.
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 to provide special help to various people groups. Should be involved in planning and organizing- Economy, Markets, Education, Healthcare and other areas should be managed.	Should be limited. At the end of the day, government is power and therefore should be restrained. Care for people and people groups is best done through families and by having a healthy economy where laws make it fair for all people to compete and earn a living to care for their families and others. Centralized planning is inefficient and open to fraud and abuse. Individuals and businesses do a better job of organizing themselves than government planners.
View of the founding of America	Founding was based on discrimination and privilege and the Founders ideas are no longer relevant..	Founding was based liberty and setting up a structure unlike any in the world that would allow self government and 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. Uses most of the worlds resources and has taken from other countries and peoples.	Has been a force for good in the world. The US. has flaws but has worked to overcome them. Uses the worlds resources, but in so doing makes life better for people around the world through trade and spread of freedom.
View of Americans	America is a mosaic of different people groups and in diversity there is strength. Some groups have been victimized and need government help to get what they deserve.	E Pluribus Unum. “Out of the many, one.” That every American should ascribe to the American ideals of hard work and personal responsibility. People should be judged on the “content of the character not the color of their skin.”
First Amendment – Freedom of	Freedom of Worship. A person can hold their beliefs in private or in their place of worship, but once they enter the public sphere they may not express any beliefs publically	Freedom of Religion. A person can hold and live out their beliefs in their private and public life. That the federal government cannot interfere with those rights as long as those

Religion	which is against any government granted policy or that people find offensive.	rights don't harm another or work against the stability of the basic family unit. (i.e. no polygamy in marriage, no drug use as a religious right). All opinions (as opposed to actions) should be tolerated.
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. Religion is a private matter and almost any expression that refers to God in a public place or by a public official is a violation of "establishing" a religion.	The phrase is not in the Constitution. The Constitutional principle is that the federal government does not even have a role in church-state issues, but that it is a state level and local issue and can be decided there. Religious expression in public life by government officials, school officials, and state and local governments do not equate to "Congress making a law in regards to the establishment of religion".
First Amendment – 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. Sexual expression in art and pornography is an approved free speech area and should not be judged or have many limits	Broader Freedom of speech. All ideas should be heard or tolerated whether offensive or not. Speech should be controlled that would harm another, libel, slander, or cause crowd panic. Pornography should be controlled based on community standards as it undermines the family.
Second Amendment – 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. Once this is decided, it is simply a question of what provides the best level of protection. A fist, a knife, a gun? 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 rights and responsibilities unique to them and not the jurisdiction of the federal government.
View of Social Issues		
Abortion	Abortion should be widely available with minimum restraints. It is a right and should be a woman's choice. Some feel even up to the point of birth. Women should have sexual freedom and be free to deal with the consequences as they see fit Strong support for Roe v. Wade. Strong support for Planned Parenthood and other Abortion Providers with tax payer money. 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 mothers life is in danger. Women an men have a choice to be sexual responsible, but once a child is conceived they surrender their right to terminate the life of the child. Science has dramatically advanced since Roe v Wade. A baby's heartbeat and brain waves can be detected at 6-7 weeks. A baby is genetically a human at conception. Life begins at conception or at heartbeat. 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. Sociologically this has been shown to produce the most stable societies. This does not preclude extended family, single parent families, or couples who cannot or choose not to have kids.
Marriage	Marriage should be redefined to be available for any two or more people of any sex who love each other.	Marriage either means something or it means nothing at all. To redefine it is to create a slippery slope where the meaning just continues to change. Marriage is between a man and a woman and this building block concept is the foundation of Western society. Government has a responsibility to protect it, it does not have the authority to redefine it.
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 school because parents may or may not provide proper information or guidance at home.	Children are the responsibility of the parent and discussion the parents and families moral values should guide the discussion on sex education. Teens and young adults can make choices in this area and many can choose abstinence until marriage when they have been given proper information and supported in their decision.

Race Relations	Slavery was wrong and racism is wrong. Racism still exists today and it is institutionalized. African Americans are particularly the victims of this. The federal government needs to be actively engaged in raising awareness of racism, pointing out racism and in monitoring and prosecuting racism.	Slavery was wrong and racism is wrong. The country has come a long way and paid a steep price to address these national shortcomings. Racism of all kinds still exists in parts of culture today amongst whites, blacks and others. 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 government needs to rectify these wrongs through law making and through the courts. LGTBO ideas need to be embraced, celebrated and endorsed in government, workplaces, schools, universities and in free associations. Diversity makes us stronger. Lifestyle choices should not be judged.	The LGTBO movement is not the moral equivalent to the black civil rights movement. Human sexuality can be fluid or changing within LGTBO. Sexual experimentation brings people into the movement, but there are those who leave the lifestyle as well. In recent years LGTBO activists have become such a political force that the LGTBO agenda is now used to drive any expression of faith or disagreement with the lifestyle out of the public square. Both corporate leaders as well as small business owners have lost their jobs and businesses and incurred lawsuits and heavy fines because they have not embraced, celebrated or endorsed the LGTBO lifestyle.
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 are dangerous and can be abused. Central planners know better how to make things efficient. The drive to have government control Healthcare is a major example of this.	The free markets know best and it is the most efficient way for resources to be allocated through "price". This also fosters the greatest creativity and innovation. Regulation is needed to restrain cheating, fraud, or wrongful use of environmental resources. Government should stay out of the way as much as possible and let the markets work.
Minimum Wage	Minimum Wage needs to be raised to "a living wage" in order that adults can support themselves and others. Unskilled workers may not have any other options.	Minimum Wage laws deter the formation of entry level jobs where teenagers and others can gain their first work experiences – showing up on time, doing a proper job, getting along with others. Minimum wage jobs are not designed to be lifetime jobs. When the Minimum Wage is increased the number of these job decreases and actually results in more long term unemployment and less skill formation among teens and young adults.
Government Spending – Budget, National Debt	Government spending is important and needs to be increased to stimulate the economy and to support social programs. The national debt is not an issue. Keynesian economics says government debt is actually a positive good.	Government spending should be controlled and the size of the national debt is an issue that will be a burden on future generations. It needs to be brought under control. Part of the party believes this. Others do not or don't seem to care.
Taxes	Highly Supportive of "Progressive Income Tax" where the more you make the more you pay in taxes. By taxing the wealthy more, government can take the proceeds and run government programs to help the poor and other projects. This is fair. This is the tax system currently in place. Tax rates should be raised even higher on wealthy Americans.	Generally supportive of "Non-Progressive Income Tax" either in the form of reforming the rates for various groups or instituting a Flat Tax or National Sales Tax. This would in affect make everyone pay the same tax rate. This provides incentive for people to better themselves as the more they make in wages, the more they keep. Wealthy Americans can be trusted better than government to invest their money in new endeavors that grow jobs or through benevolence and non-profit work to help those who are less well off
Welfare	Various groups have been victimized or fallen on hard luck over time and the government should be a key player in supporting them, providing economic help and caring for the poor among us. Government should provide a leg up, skills training, and long term support of individuals and families where the father is absent. Government shows	Individuals and families do get victimized and fall on hard luck. The best safety net is extended family as they are closest to the situation. Locally churches, religious groups, and community non-profits are the next best. State and federal government should be the last resort and should be very short lived. Welfare to work programs are key to helping individuals be self

	compassion by making these benefits last as long as possible.	responsible as it motivates them to work toward a solution to their problem as quickly as possible. Government is not an agent of "compassion", individuals and groups of individuals giving up time and resources to help those in need is true "compassion"
View of National Concerns		
Education Administration	Education administration should be centralized, starting with strong direction from the Dept of Education providing guidelines to States and local school boards. Teacher unions are strongly supported and voucher programs and merit based pay programs are strongly resisted.	Education administration should be de-centralized and under local community control. Local parents and teachers know best. The Dept. of Education is big and bloated and should be downsized or eliminated. Teachers unions stand in the way of education reform. Support voucher programs and merit based pay.
Environment	Believes man-made global warming has been 100% confirmed by science and that it has fatal consequences for the entire world. That time is short and that government should implement significant regulations on businesses, industry and citizens to control consumption and pollution to combat global climate change. Additionally, should make binding promises with other countries to do more.	Believes that climate change is real and that it goes through cycles that last decades and centuries. That man's role in affecting climate change is unproven. That scientific computer models have been proven incorrect and politicized. That debate on the topic is being stifled when opponents use terms like "climate deniers". That no science is ever 100% settled or there would be no debate. That the environment should be protected, but that this protection should be balanced with people's right to flourish.
Foreign Policy	The United States has been too big a player on the world stage in dictating terms to the world. US needs to step back and defer to others and be more of a team player in the global community. Greater deference should be given to global entities, like the World Court, the United Nations, and NGO groups.	The United States is in a unique position because of history and values to be a leader in the world. Should play a key role in advancing freedom and liberty. Some would advocate for active "nation building" direct and long term involvement. Others believe "nation building" is a bad idea and that US role is to be allies to our friends and frank and direct to our opponents. Let other countries sort things out for themselves. There is distrust of the World Court and the United Nations as entities that the US should defer to.
Health Care	Everybody should have healthcare and the government should be involved in making sure they get it. Central planning and government health care exchanges will reduce costs and provide healthcare to all. Drug companies, hospitals, doctors, and insurance providers will have to follow government guidelines for the system to work.	US healthcare has been the world leader in quality care. Government regulations should be removed so that insurance carriers and health care providers can compete across a broader number of states and that this would reduce costs. Regulations are needed, but need to be fewer in number and targeted at the greatest abuses. With less government regulation, free markets will act to lower the price and to spark innovation. No one will be denied healthcare as hospitals and doctors choose on their won to offer care to those in need.
End of Life	Death with Dignity. An individual, family and medical professionals can decide end of life and quality of life issues. If 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.	Death with Dignity. An individual, family and medical professionals can decide end of life and quality of life issues. A physicians role is to help support the individuals or families decision and are to be active in helping with pain management or withdrawal of life support. However, it compromises the medial profession for doctors to play an active role in ended a persons life. Does not believe in doctor "assisted suicide"
Immigration	America is obligated to take in immigrants from other countries. It is the compassionate thing to do. 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. There should be no blanket amnesty for those that are here illegally. Politicians should not ignore immigration laws because they see illegal immigrants as new voting blocks for their party. Legal immigration should have a filter to allow people into the country who want to become American, believe in American ideals and

		want to assimilate
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. If we decreased the size of the military we would find greater peace in the world because other nations would feel less threatened by us.	A strong military deters aggression. National Defense is one of the primary charges of the federal government. The US military extends American ideals around the world. This sometimes leads to nation building that not all agree with
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. National Sovereignty is not as important and can even be dangerous because it leads to nationalism. The United States needs to be more of a "team player" and differ to other nations and occasionally submit to guidelines of the global community of nations.	The United States is a unique nation that is different than the rest of the nations of the world. The principles of the Declaration of Independence combined with the structure of the Constitution make up something unique called the American Experiment in Self Government. Can a nation of men and women govern themselves with limited government oversight to enjoy freedom and liberty? Therefore national sovereignty should be preserved and protected.
Recreational Drug Use	Marijuana should be legalized. It is no different than drinking alcohol in moderation. Legalization can bring it out of the illegal realm and into a place where government can regulate it and tax it. This will actually help to reduce crime and other illegal drug use when it is brought out into the open.	Marijuana should not be legalized. It is different than alcohol. It is a gateway drug to other drugs. To legalize it is to have the government "endorse" its use as morally neutral and will actually expand the number of people using the drug. This will have a negative affect on families, communities and states. Crime will go up and illegal drug use will increase as people get hooked and want something more or stronger to provide them a better "high"
Science	Science has special promise to discover new things and that will lead to new innovations. 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. Accuses opponents of being anti-science when they disagree.	Science has special promise to discover new things and that will lead to new innovations. Scientific debate is good and healthy. Science is not always unbiased and can be manipulated for political purposes. Accuses opponents of stifling debate (i.e. declaring something as 100% settled) and politicizing science.
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. IDs are a standard part of doing important things in society and should be a requirement to vote. Various forms of IDs should be approved so that no undue hardship falls on a particular person. To not have voter ID is to invite election fraud.
View of Crime and Punishment		
Crime and Punishment	Everyone person should be equal before the law and have a fair and speedy trial before a jury of their peers. Some people groups, however, 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 and if "hate" is determined to be there it should have greater punishment.	Hate crime legislation is a political invention and not needed. A crime is a crime and that the law applies to actions, not motives. That judges and juries cannot look into a persons heart and actually know if "hate" lies there. Judges already have tools in their sentencing guidelines that can be applied based on the severity of the crimes.
Death Penalty	Generally opposed to it. The criminal possibly has been a victim in his life and so his crime can be at least	Generally supportive of death penalty. Life is valuable and when a life is maliciously taken and proper proceedings have

	understood though not forgiven. Rehabilitation is the best path.	taken place the death penalty can deter other criminals from being careless with the taking of life.
View of Miscellaneous Philosophical Items that Influence Policy		
The Declaration of Independence	A document from the past. The concept of a Creator endowing individuals with inalienable rights seems like an antiquated idea in light of the commitment to the theory of evolution.	Still relevant, inspiring and true for today.
Life	Humans are a product of evolution. We are really no different than animals except our cognitive skills are more advanced.	Humans are unique and made in the image of God. Or if a person does not believe in God, that man is unique compared to all else in the animal kingdom.
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. Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness being among some of the chief rights.
The Nature of Man	The Educated Classes are basically good and can be trusted with power and with that power will do good for society. The uneducated classes are flawed and need to be guided, regulated, or controlled because they do not have the knowledge to know what is best and know what to do.	All of humankind has a flaw and cannot be trusted with power over his fellow man. The Constitution serves to control men and women that are given government power. The uneducated classes are no more flawed than the educated classes and all men need to overcome their own self destructive tendencies and when they do they can be a part of something heroic.
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 is what makes society stable and just and fair. To get to an end result it needs to fall under existing law or new laws need to be passed in order to advance a particular idea or policy
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. Government leaders articulate a general idea of what equality means. In the case of income, government should be involved in the process of spreading it around and making sure things are equal.	Equality of opportunity. Everyone is equal before God and equal before a court of law. The content of a persons character is the great equalizer. Everyone comes from a different background with different talents, strengths and economic circumstances. The government plays the role of making sure everyone has an equal opportunity in the free markets to compete, make a living, and to improve themselves. Governments role is not to spread income around.
Social Justice	Social Justice is a movement to rectify the wrongs of society. There are many groups and individuals that have been victimized in the United States and there is a lot of inequality as a result. The government has a key role to bring about change through how it enforces the law with various groups and how the courts should apply the law differently in different situations. The government should help determine the injustices that have existed and work to rectify those injustices	Justice means that all people are equal before the law – rich, poor/ young-old/ male-female/black-white-asian-hispanic/ etc. Social Justice has no clear definition and can be construed to mean anything. When social justice implies there is a societal wrong to a person or individual there needs to be a support system and advocacy to rectify the wrong.

It is time to stop voting for a person because of their talking points, or their marketing strategy, or how they look on TV. It is time to stop taking what the TV news and or newspapers would persuade us to believe. It is time to quit believing the negative attack ads against a candidate or party just because someone is declaring something as true. It may not be true. It is time to become responsible again to ourselves and our country and look at our values and why we hold them and then vote for a party that most aligns with those values.

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