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Discovering Your Political Ideology [brochure and streaming video]

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POLITICAL CHEAT SHEET

The ultimate rulers of our democracy are not a President and senators and congressmen and government officials, but the voters of this country.
-Franklin D. Roosevelt

Politics are defined as activities associated with the governance of a country.

The United States government is structured in three branches:
- Legislative: Senate and House
- Judicial: Supreme Court and Appellate Courts
- Executive: President and Cabinet

These three branches function on a series of checks and balances wherein each branch is able to check the power of the others.

On the docket

Information

U.S. Government 101

Republican and Democratic Platforms

Action

Register to Vote

Community Involvement

Why You Need to Know This

The primary way that an individual can demonstrate his or her political views is through the election process. In the United States, citizens have the right to cast votes in favor of the political candidates they wish to represent them in both the Legislative and Executive branches. These candidates, as well as the voters who support them, typically belong to political parties. The dominant political parties in the United States are the Republican Party and the Democratic Party. Typically, one registers as a member of the party that most closely aligns with one's political persuasion.

Platform of the Republican Party

The Republican Party is considered the main "conservative" political party in the United States and was founded in 1854.

1. Tax Policy- Tax cuts for all (focus on businesses).
2. Social Issues- Favor traditional marriage, anti-abortion, pro-firearms.
3. Labor and Trade- Free trade, no increase to minimum wage.
4. Health Care- Low government intervention, repeal Affordable Care Act
5. Social Programs- Focus on private organizational charity with tighter government restrictions on current programs
6. Foreign Policy- Focus on military intervention to aid other nations and prioritize military budget.
7. Energy and the Environment- Market regulation rather than gov't regulation.
8. Education- Want to improve public school with longer hours and more focused programs. For college, they favor promoting the private sector giving loans and not the government.
9. Crime and Punishment- Focus on punishment to deter crime and support the death penalty.
10. Individual Liberty- Free to act as you wish as long as you are not inhibiting the liberties of others.

Platform of the Democratic Party

The Democratic Party is considered the main "liberal" political party in the United States and was founded in 1828.

1. Tax Policy- Tax cuts for middle and low-income families, but believe taxes should be higher on corporations and wealthy individuals.
2. Social Issues- favoring abortion and gay marriage, more likely to support gun control.
3. Labor and Trade- Increase minimum wage and tax imported goods to protect jobs.
4. Health Care- Accessibility via government regulation of the health care industry. Generally support ACA.
5. Social Programs- Generally support the current system of social programs and believe more money should be spent on them.
6. Foreign Policy- Targeted strikes, limited use of manpower, decreased military spending
7. Energy and the Environment- Alternative energy solutions, reduced drilling and improved environmental protection
8. Education- Common curriculum established by the government as well as government loans at the college level.
9. Crime and Punishment- Focus on rehabilitation and less punishment for non-violent crimes. Generally opposed to the death penalty.
10. Individual Liberty- Favor some individual liberty restrictions in return for increased public safety and security.

How Does It Work?

Primary: Multiple candidates compete to represent their party.
General: The final nominees from each party are endorsed and compete for the presidency.
For information on voter registration:
- Register Online: https://vrsws.sos.ky.gov/ovrweb/
- Check Registration: https://vrsws.sos.ky.gov/vic/

Getting Involved

The two most common university student political organizations in the United States are the College Republicans and the Young Democrats. These organizations maintain national chapters and conduct annual debates between the two organizations.
- College Republicans: http://www.crnc.org/
- Young Democrats: https://www.yda.org/

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