

When someone tells you, “I do not like your politics” – what does this imply? What is a Democrat or a Republican? When one talks about a liberal (how the Democrats are viewed) or a conservative (how the Republicans are perceived), how do we categorize ourselves? Certainly, this goes beyond pro choice save the froggies (sic) activism or highbrow church-going-goody-two-shoes!

When I became an American citizen and was asked to register for a political party, I did not sign up for either the Democratic or Republican parties because I was politically clueless. Google was still a concept waiting to become a search engine. Living in the San Francisco Bay area where Democrat politicians proliferated, finding an elected Republican was rather a challenge. Because of martial law in the Philippines, I never had a chance to vote. With the freedom of suffrage that accompanied my allegiance to the American flag, choosing the right leaders was of utmost importance to me. Thus, I registered as an Independent thinking that my choice will be based on the merit of the candidates rather than political partisanship. I could not have been more wrong, especially when the wrestler, Jesse Ventura, became the trophy of the Independent party. Nevertheless, I continued to cross party lines during election time and campaigned for candidates whom I admired - never mind that I was not their constituent or with their party – but because they have done something worthy of my support. It was my journey towards political growth or confusion . . .

An East Coast businesswoman was specific with her views:

“ The bottom line is both the Republican and Democrat parties want to serve the people but with very different approaches. The Republicans encourage entrepreneurship and less government intervention unless necessary, while the Democrats prefer doing charitable things through welfare and social programs like Robin Hood stealing from the rich to help the poor.”

“ I truly believe that the Democratic approach encourages recalcitrance and laziness and being content with what is easy to obtain with not much effort. The Democrats do not encourage citizens to be independent and self-reliant; instead citizens are always viewed as victims who should not be responsible for their own actions or inactions. Look at the labor unions in this country; they caused job outsourcing and practically killed many small businesses that cannot afford the high cost of labor here.”

“Lest people forget, a Republican abolished slavery while a Democrat started the welfare program. Additionally, the Republicans encourage immigrants to prove and demonstrate that the US is truly a land of opportunity by supporting entrepreneurship and creativity. I’ve always viewed the Republicans as business-friendly through my own experience as a business owner. And yes, they are tough on terrorism, thus keeping us safe to enjoy our lives in peace.”

Is the Republican Party anti-poor? A Los Angeles attorney said:

“I am listed as a Democrat but I have voted independently in the last two years. I do not believe that the Republicans are anti-poor. I agree that they are anti-poverty. By hard work and being frugal in our way of life, we may even be at the tax level targeted by the Democrats but they ought to know that while the others were enjoying and spending their earnings, we were living a simple life and saving for our retirement. These same earnings that were already taxed are proposed to be taxed again by the Democrats under a different name - estate tax.”

“ The next President should be one who 'truly' cares about the American people. If the feeling is sincere and not politically or money driven, all his actions and decisions will reflect this feeling. The next President should also have strong moral values and should not be afraid to accept this even if it is unpopular at the present times. This reflects on his integrity of character and strong personality. After all, it is really Congress and not him that pass the law. We should not blame the president for all the bad things happening to the economy. The President can only veto laws passed by the Congress and even this can be overridden. We need a President that by his acts and quality of proposals can influence the Congress to be bipartisan after the election.”

A retired military officer's opinion goes beyond partisanship:

“There is another serious problem, which is the vote itself. Most individuals are too indolent/lazy/ignorant to understand what they are voting about, i.e., they vote according to what someone else tells them such as the unions, lobbyists, pressure groups, or look at issues in terms of the impact on their rice bowl, rarely ever on the facts of the issues.

"In my opinion, no one should be allowed to vote unless they sit in a classroom to listen to the facts and then must pass an examination with a minimum passing grade of 75% to evidence comprehension at a level essential to making an informed vote. Being educated on the issues is the duty of each voter and when they fail that task, they are traitors to their own Constitution. Emotions should not drive the vote. The facts should be examined to determine how to vote."

From a grandma who is pro-choice in Michigan:“Democrats are too liberal in giving monetary help to people "in need" instead of forcing them to work. I came from the Philippines where there is no welfare. Although people there are willing to work, there are no opportunities so they are forced to go overseas. This is not the case here. I think some people are just lazy.”
“Republicans are sometimes too conservative. I am pro choice. I don't want creation taught instead of evolution to public school children.”

A conservative in Burlingame describes her creed:

“Democrats reach out to people and let them stay where they are and encouraged to be boxed in the culture where they came from. They call it SALAD.” Republicans believe that we are ONE NATION UNDER GOD, with the honest aspiration for LIFE, LIBERTY AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS and are willing to create jobs and opportunities for all. The Republicans freed slavery and granted women suffrage -- the right to vote. They gave citizenship to Filipino veterans (Democrats talk too much about the poor veterans but what have they really done for

them?)

“The Republicans have respect for life. Democrats are into the engineering of life---abortion, cloning and now euthanasia. Well, they don't really want to kill old people so they have created this law called "assisted suicide"

From a retired executive on health care:

“I am terribly disappointed with the oncoming presidential election, with both parties. For two main reasons:

1. Americans don't realize that just one bomb over Manhattan will wreak more damage to the US economy than the present economic slowdown. They think the danger is now minimal, especially with the success of the "surge" in Iraq, and the success of the government in preventing a major terrorist attack in the US for some seven years. The terrorists have to succeed only once, and they have not stopped trying.
2. Universal Health Care. Practically neglected, by both parties. Would have a major effect on poverty, on the health of the economy, and US competitiveness in the world arena. Of course we would have to accept that there would have to be some rationing of health care, as the country could not afford to keep a lot of "dead" people alive at public expense.”

Another journalist's opinion on American politics: Filipino style:

“Traditionally, for the sake of "describing" them as a collective mindset, Republicans are conservatives and Democrats are liberals – although I tend to debunk that "description" as I delve deeper into individual views/opinions. Filipinos are enigmatic, ambivalent and sometimes flexible voters, I believe. They tend to swing to this party and that party, especially those who are familiar with the Philippines' multi-party politics—party-swinging/fence-crossing aspirants. The continuously fluid sociopolitical conditions make Filipinos relax their "traditional" affiliations with either of the party spectrum. That is smart thinking, actually. Filipinos have come a long way. These days, they read, they discuss, they debate, they observe. "Misconceptions" are often borne out of chameleonic political situations/realities of the times. For example, one views one candidate as conservative in terms of foreign policy (i.e. Iraq war) but liberal in terms of national concerns (like immigration issues or educational reforms). The bottom line is that voters should study political platforms and programs and not just adhere to party conventions or traditions.”

Food for thought:

“We do not receive wisdom; we must discover it for ourselves after a journey that no one can take for us or spare us.” – Marcel Proust

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