

Conservative vs. Liberal Beliefs

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We all want the same things in life. We want freedom; we want the chance for prosperity; we want as few people suffering as possible; we want healthy children; we want to have crime-free streets. The argument is how to achieve them...

Liberals believe in government action to achieve equal opportunity and equality for all. It is the duty of the government to alleviate social ills and to protect civil liberties and individual and human rights. Believe the role of the government should be to guarantee that no one is in need. Liberal policies generally emphasize the need for the government to solve problems.

Conservatives believe in personal responsibility, limited government, free markets, individual liberty, traditional American values and a strong national defense. Believe the role of government should be to provide people the freedom necessary to pursue their own goals. Conservative policies generally emphasize empowerment of the individual to solve problems.

NOTE: The terms “left” and “right” define opposite ends of the political spectrum. In the United States, liberals are referred to as the left or left-wing and conservatives are referred to as the right or right-wing. On the

U.S. political map, blue represents the Democratic Party (which generally upholds liberal principles) and red represents the Republican party (which generally upholds conservative principles).

THE ISSUES: (In alphabetical order)

Abortion

Liberal

A woman has the right to decide what happens with her body. A fetus is not a human life, so it does not have separate individual rights. The government should provide taxpayer funded abortions for women who cannot afford them. The decision to have an abortion is a personal choice of a woman regarding her own body and the government must protect this right. Women have the right to affordable, safe and legal abortions, including partial birth abortion.

Conservative

Human life begins at conception. Abortion is the murder of a human being. An unborn baby, as a living human being, has separate rights from those of the mother. Oppose taxpayer-funded abortion. Taxpayer dollars should not be used for the government to provide abortions. Support legislation to prohibit partial birth abortions, called the “Partial Birth Abortion* Ban” (**Partial Birth Abortion: the killing of an unborn baby of at least 20 weeks by pulling it out of the birth canal with forceps, but leaving the head inside. An incision is made in the back of the baby’s neck and the brain tissue is suctioned out. The head is then removed from the uterus.*)

Affirmative Action

Liberal

Due to prevalent racism in the past, minorities were deprived of the same education and employment opportunities as whites. The government must work to make up for that. America is still a racist society, therefore a federal affirmative action law is necessary. Due to unequal opportunity,

minorities still lag behind whites in all statistical measurements of success.

Conservative

Individuals should be admitted to schools and hired for jobs based on their ability. It is unfair to use race as a factor in the selection process. Reverse-discrimination is not a solution for racism. Some individuals in society are racist, but American society as a whole is not. Preferential treatment of certain races through affirmative action is wrong.

Death Penalty

Liberal

The death penalty should be abolished. It is inhumane and is 'cruel and unusual' punishment. Imprisonment is the appropriate punishment for murder. Every execution risks killing an innocent person.

Conservative

The death penalty is a punishment that fits the crime of murder; it is neither 'cruel' nor 'unusual.' Executing a murderer is the appropriate punishment for taking an innocent life.

Economy

Liberal

A market system in which government regulates the economy is best. Government must protect citizens from the greed of big business. Unlike the private sector, the government is motivated by public interest. Government regulation in all areas of the economy is needed to level the playing field.

Conservative

The free market system, competitive capitalism, and private enterprise create the greatest opportunity and the highest standard of living for all. Free markets produce more economic growth, more jobs and higher standards of living than those systems burdened by excessive government regulation.

Education – *vouchers & charter schools*

Liberal

Public schools are the best way to educate students. Vouchers take money away from public schools. Government should focus additional funds on existing public schools, raising teacher salaries and reducing class size.

Conservative

School vouchers create competition and therefore encourage schools to improve performance. Vouchers will give all parents the right to choose good schools for their children, not just those who can afford private schools.

Embryonic Stem Cell Research

Liberal

Support the use of *embryonic stem cells* for research. It is necessary (and ethical) for the government to fund *embryonic* stem cell research, which will assist scientists in finding treatments and cures for diseases. An embryo is not a human. The tiny blastocyst (embryos used in embryonic stem cell research) has no human features. Experimenting on embryos/embryonic stem cells is not murder. *Embryonic stem cells* have the potential to cure chronic and degenerative diseases which current medicine has been unable to effectively treat. *Embryonic stem cells* have been shown to be effective in treating heart damage in mice.

Conservative

Support the use of *adult and umbilical cord stem cells only* for research. It is morally and ethically wrong for the government to fund *embryonic* stem cell research. Human life begins at conception. The extraction of stem cells from an embryo requires its destruction. In other words, it requires that a human life be killed. *Adult stem cells* have already been used to treat spinal cord injuries, Leukemia, and even Parkinson's disease. Adult stem cells are derived from umbilical cords, placentas, amniotic fluid, various tissues and organ systems like skin and the liver, and even fat

obtained from liposuction. *Embryonic stem cells* have not been successfully used to help cure disease.

Energy

Liberal

Oil is a depleting resource. Other sources of energy must be explored. The government must produce a national plan for all energy resources and subsidize (partially pay for) alternative energy research and production. Support increased exploration of alternative energy sources such as wind and solar power. Support government control of gas and electric industries.

Conservative

Oil, gas and coal are all good sources of energy and are abundant in the U.S. Oil drilling should be increased both on land and at sea. Increased domestic production creates lower prices and less dependence on other countries for oil. Support increased production of nuclear energy. Wind and solar sources will never provide plentiful, affordable sources of power. Support private ownership of gas and electric industries.

Euthanasia & Physician-assisted suicide

Liberal

Euthanasia should be legalized. A person has a right to die with dignity, by his own choice. A terminally ill person should have the right to choose to end pain and suffering. It is wrong for the government to take away the means for a terminally ill person to hasten his death. It is wrong to force a person to go through so much pain and suffering. Legalizing euthanasia would not lead to doctor-assisted suicides of non-critical patients.

Permitting euthanasia would reduce health care costs, which would then make funds available for those who could truly benefit from medical care.

Conservative

Neither euthanasia nor physician-assisted suicide should be legalized. It is

immoral and unethical to deliberately end the life of a terminally ill person (euthanasia), or enable another person to end their own life (assisted suicide). The goal should be compassionate care and easing the suffering of terminally ill people. Legalizing euthanasia could lead to doctor-assisted suicides of non-critical patients. If euthanasia were legalized, insurance companies could pressure doctors to withhold life-saving treatment for dying patients. Many religions prohibit suicide and euthanasia. These practices devalue human life.

Global Warming/Climate Change

Liberal

Global warming is caused by an increased production of carbon dioxide through the burning of fossil fuels (coal, oil and natural gas). The U.S. is a major contributor to global warming because it produces 25% of the world's carbon dioxide. Proposed laws to reduce carbon emissions in the U.S. are urgently needed and should be enacted immediately to save the planet. Many reputable scientists support this theory.

Conservative

Change in global temperature is natural over long periods of time. Science has not shown that humans can affect permanent change to the earth's temperature. Proposed laws to reduce carbon emissions will do nothing to help the environment and will cause significant price increases for all. Many reputable scientists support this theory.

Gun Control

Liberal

The Second Amendment does not give citizens the right to keep and bear arms, but only allows for the state to keep a militia (National Guard). Individuals do not need guns for protection; it is the role of local and federal government to protect the people through law enforcement agencies and the military. Additional gun control laws are necessary to stop gun violence and limit the ability of criminals to obtain guns. More guns mean more violence.

Conservative

The Second Amendment gives citizens the right to keep and bear arms. Individuals have the right to defend themselves. There are too many gun control laws – additional laws will not lower gun crime rates. What is needed is enforcement of current laws. Gun control laws do not prevent criminals from obtaining guns. More guns in the hands of law-abiding citizens mean less crime.

Full text of the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: “A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.”

Healthcare

Liberal

Support free or low-cost government controlled health care. There are millions of Americans who can't afford health care and are deprived of this basic right. Every American has a right to affordable health care. The government should provide equal health care benefits for all, regardless of their ability to pay.

Conservative

Support competitive, free market health care system. All Americans have access to health care. The debate is about who should pay for it. Free and low-cost government-run programs (socialized medicine) result in higher costs and everyone receiving the same poor-quality health care. Health care should remain privatized. The problem of uninsured individuals should be addressed and solved within the free market healthcare system – the government should not control healthcare.

Homeland Security

Liberal

Airport security – Passenger profiling is wrong, period. Selection of passengers for extra security screening should be random. Using other criteria (such as ethnicity) is discriminatory and offensive to Arabs and

Muslims, who are generally innocent and law-abiding. Terrorists don't fit a profile.

"...Arabs, Muslims and South Asians are no more likely than whites to be terrorists." (American Civil Liberties Union ACLU)

Asked on 60 Minutes if a 70-year-old white woman from Vero Beach should receive the same level of scrutiny as a Muslim from Jersey City, President Obama's Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta said, "Basically, I would hope so."

Conservative

Airport security – Choosing passengers randomly for extra security searches is not effective. Rather, profiling and intelligence data should be used to single out passengers for extra screening. Those who do not meet the criteria for suspicion should not be subjected to intense screening. The terrorists currently posing a threat to the U.S. are primarily Islamic/Muslim men between the ages of 18 and 38. Our resources should be focused on this group. Profiling is good logical police work.

"If people are offended (by profiling), that's unfortunate, but I don't think we can afford to take the risk that terrorism brings to us. They've wasted masses of resources on far too many people doing things that really don't have a big payoff in terms of security." – Northwestern University Aviation Expert, A.Gellman.

Immigration

Liberal

Support legal immigration. Support amnesty for those who enter the U.S. illegally (undocumented immigrants). Also believe that undocumented immigrants have a right to:

- all educational and health benefits that citizens receive (financial aid, welfare, social security and medicaid), regardless of legal status.
- the same rights as American citizens. It is unfair to arrest millions of undocumented immigrants.

Conservative

Support legal immigration only. Oppose amnesty for those who enter the U.S. illegally (illegal immigrants). Those who break the law by entering the

U.S. illegally do not have the same rights as those who obey the law and enter legally. The borders should be secured before addressing the problem of the illegal immigrants currently in the country. The Federal Government should secure the borders and enforce current immigration law.

Private Property

Liberal

Government has the right to use eminent domain (seizure of private property by the government—with compensation to the owner) to accomplish a public end.

Conservative

Respect ownership and private property rights. Eminent domain (seizure of private property by the government—with compensation to the owner) in most cases is wrong. Eminent domain should not be used for private development.

Religion & Government

Liberal

Support the separation of church and state. The Bill of Rights implies a separation of church and state. Religious expression has no place in government. The two should be completely separate. Government should not support religious expression in any way. All reference to God in public and government spaces should be removed (eg., the Ten Commandments should not be displayed in Federal buildings). Religious expression has no place in government.

Conservative

The phrase *“separation of church and state”* is not in the Constitution. The First Amendment to the Constitution states *“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..”* This prevents the government from establishing a national church/denomination. However, it does not prohibit God from being acknowledged in schools and government buildings. Symbols of

Christian heritage should not be removed from public and government spaces (eg., the Ten Commandments should continue to be displayed in Federal buildings). Government should not interfere with religion and religious freedom.

Same-sex Marriage

Liberal

Marriage is the union of people who love each other. It should be legal for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender individuals, to ensure equal rights for all. Support same-sex marriage. Opposed to the creation of a constitutional amendment establishing marriage as the union of one man and one woman. All individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation, have the right to marry. Prohibiting same-sex citizens from marrying denies them their civil rights. [Opinions vary on whether this issue is equal to civil rights for African Americans.]

Conservative

Marriage is the union of one man and one woman. Oppose same-sex marriage.

Support Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), passed in 1996, which affirms the right of states not to recognize same-sex marriages licensed in other states.

Requiring citizens to sanction same-sex relationships violates moral and religious beliefs of millions of Christians, Jews, Muslims and others, who believe marriage is the union of one man and one woman.

Social Security

Liberal

The Social Security system should be protected at all costs. Reduction in future benefits is not a reasonable option. [Opinions vary on the extent of the current system's financial stability.] Social Security provides a safety net for the nation's poor and needy. Changing the system would cause a reduction in benefits and many people would suffer as a result.

Conservative

The Social Security system is in serious financial trouble. Major changes to the current system are urgently needed. In its current state, the Social Security system is not financially sustainable. It will collapse if nothing is done to address the problems. Many will suffer as a result. Social Security must be made more efficient through privatization and/or allowing individuals to manage their own savings.

Taxes

Liberal

Higher taxes (primarily for the wealthy) and a larger government are necessary to address inequity/injustice in society (government should help the poor and needy using tax dollars from the rich). Support a large government to provide for the needs of the people and create equality. Taxes enable the government to create jobs and provide welfare programs for those in need. Government programs are a caring way to provide for the poor and needy in society.

Conservative

Lower taxes and a smaller government with limited power will improve the standard of living for all. Support lower taxes and a smaller government. Lower taxes create more incentive for people to work, save, invest, and engage in entrepreneurial endeavors. Money is best spent by those who earn it, not the government. Government programs encourage people to become dependent and lazy, rather than encouraging work and independence.

United Nations (UN)

Liberal

The UN promotes peace and human rights. The United States has a moral and a legal obligation to support the United Nations (UN). The U.S. should not act as a sovereign nation, but as one member of a world community. The U.S. should submit its national interests to the greater good of the global community (as defined by the UN). The U.S. should defer to the UN

in military/peacekeeping matters. The United Nations Charter gives the United Nations Security Council the power and responsibility to take collective action to maintain international peace and security. U.S. troops should submit to UN command.

Conservative

The UN has repeatedly failed in its essential mission to promote world peace and human rights. The wars, genocide and human rights abuses taking place in many Human Rights Council member states (and the UN's failure to stop them) prove this point. History shows that the United States, not the UN, is the global force for spreading freedom, prosperity, tolerance and peace. The U.S. should never subvert its national interests to those of the UN. The U.S. should never place troops under UN control. U.S. military should always wear the U.S. military uniform, not that of UN peacekeepers. [Opinions vary on whether the U.S. should withdraw from the UN.]

War on Terror/Terrorism

Liberal

Global warming, not terrorism, poses the greatest threat to the U.S., according to Democrats in Congress. Terrorism is a result of arrogant U.S. foreign policy. Good diplomacy is the best way to deal with terrorism. Relying on military force to defeat terrorism creates hatred that leads to more terrorism. Captured terrorists should be handled by law enforcement and tried in civilian courts.

Conservative

Terrorism poses one of the greatest threats to the U.S. The world toward which the militant Islamists strive cannot peacefully co-exist with the Western world. In the last decade, militant Islamists have repeatedly attacked Americans and American interests here and abroad. Terrorists must be stopped and destroyed. The use of intelligence-gathering and military force are the best ways to defeat terrorism around the world. Captured terrorists should be treated as enemy combatants and tried in military courts.

Welfare

Liberal

Support welfare, including long-term welfare. Welfare is a safety net which provides for the needs of the poor. Welfare is necessary to bring fairness to American economic life. It is a device for protecting the poor.

Conservative

Oppose long-term welfare. Opportunities should be provided to make it possible for those in need to become self-reliant. It is far more compassionate and effective to encourage people to become self-reliant, rather than allowing them to remain dependent on the government for provisions.

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