

## Conservatism Versus Liberalism: Does Philosophy Really Matter?

The foundational belief system you hold determines your views on specific issues. You then have strong opinions you feel are right. The Republican Party and its platform are primarily based on Conservatism, and the Democratic Party and its platform are primarily based on Liberalism. If you look at the core beliefs of Conservatism and Liberalism, you can understand and explain the different stands taken on specific issues and the vision each has for our country.

Conservatism	Liberalism
Families know best how to raise their children. They need to be strengthened and have the right to raise their children the way they want.	It takes a “village” not a family to raise a child. Families need government help and oversight.
Society is composed of individuals to be judged on their individual merit. Values individualism, self-reliance, and independence.	Society is composed of groups: black vs. white, old vs. young, rich vs. poor, male vs. female. These groups are pitted against each other.
Individuals are responsible for themselves and their actions. Crime should be punished. Evil exists and good should fight against it.	Society is responsible for individuals. The tendency is to talk about how we need to change society when someone does wrong. Even 9/11 terrorists need to be understood.
Opportunity for all to succeed or fail. Government is responsible to maintain an environment that fosters the greatest opportunity. Limit to how much can be taken from people to give to others. Welfare should help people to become independent.	Seeks to equalize by redistribution. Supports welfare state. Government has a responsibility to provide all basic needs to all who need them, and it is morally justified taking from those that have and giving it to others, because people are entitled to basic needs.
Competition is good.	Competition is unfair.
Supports lower taxes.	Supports progressive taxation with high taxes for the rich.
Less government is better. Wants only necessary regulation of business, economy, and individual lives, resulting in more freedom.	More government is better. Many regulations are necessary to achieve a more fair & just society which is government’s primary role, resulting in less freedom.
Limited federal government with more power given to state and local governments.	Powerful centralized federal government with limited state and local control.
People more important than environment.	Environment more important than people.
Wealth is good. All have an opportunity to be wealthy.	Wealth is bad and unfair. Promotes class warfare.
Equal opportunity. Same access for all.	Equal results through such things as quotas

No discrimination based on race, age, sex. Reasonable differences are okay. Doesn't seek equal outcomes.	and equal pay for unequal work. Have to level the playing field in order to have equal opportunity.
Judicial restraint with strict interpretation of laws according to the Constitution and original intent.	Judicial activism: enacting social policy changes via court rulings. Constitution is seen as outdated and in need of change.
Free market economy.	Government regulation of economy.
Business is good: creates jobs & improves lives. Give freedom for them to do what they do best. Let free market supply and demand adjust practices. Let employers and employees negotiate benefits.	Business is evil: out to exploit employees, environment, and consumers. Needs to be regulated to protect consumers, employees, and the environment. Government regulates employee benefits.
Traditional morality, including traditional family and values. Absolute standards of right and wrong. Absolute truth. Sees standing against wrong as a moral duty.	Tolerance of all lifestyles & beliefs except those that are intolerant and state they have truth. No absolute standards of right and wrong. Relativism.
Right to free speech must be supported even if it offends.	Right to free speech is limited to speech that does not offend. (Political correctness)
Peace through strength via a strong military.	Peace through appeasement, cooperation, and understanding others' views. Dislikes showing and exercising strength.
Supports a missile defense system.	Opposes a missile defense system.
American sovereignty comes before globalism.	Globalism comes before American sovereignty.
Sees America as good: the best hope for the world.	Sees America as flawed: racist, homophobic, imperialistic, sexist, ageist and no better than other countries.
Western cultures are superior to others without rights, freedom, and respect for life.	All cultures are equal. Can't pass judgment on any even if they don't value freedom, rights, and life.
God is a necessary part of a good society. Religion makes people good.	State is secular (without God). Seeks to eliminate all references of God.
Rights emphasized: Freedom, Parental, Property, Religious, Guns, Life.	Rights emphasized: Civil, Privacy, Secularism, Reproductive.

Liberalism and the Democratic Party want to pull us further towards a welfare state with an ever-expanding web of social entitlements and more federal power and control over every aspect of our lives. Liberalism sees a nation of people incapable of solving their problems without the government's help.

Conservatism and the Republican Party believe a powerful federal government limits personal freedom. We need to stop the growing entitlement programs, encourage individual responsibility, and return Constitutionally mandated power to the states. Conservatism sees a nation of people capable of solving their own problems with minimal government help, as long as the people are free.

If you are still unclear as to what the differences between the parties and their underlying philosophies are consider this:

If either party held all 100 US Senate seats, all 435 Congressional seats and the Presidency for 10 years, what would our nation be like if the Republicans held them, and what would it be like if the Democrats held them?

I propose to you that we would have two entirely different nations.

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