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Liberals and Conservatives

Although the majority of Americans have moderate political views, most voters tend to be either more liberal or more conservative on important issues. Liberals and conservatives greatly contrast each other on economic policies, education and health care, and social issues.

For a liberal, economic policies tend to favor the working-class American citizen. Liberals hold the government responsible for reducing economic inequality and believe that the wealthy should pay more taxes than the poor. Liberals insist that it is the government's duty to assist unemployed citizens in finding new work and to provide welfare until the citizen is able to relieve his or her own financial burden. Liberals also favor strict government regulation in businesses.

Conservative economic policies tend to favor middle- to upper-class Americans. Conservatives hold each individual citizen responsible for earning his or her own money. They believe that those who have earned wealth should be given tax breaks to invest more money into businesses in an effort to increase America's economy and benefit all citizens. Conservatives do not require the government to find jobs for the unemployed, and they believe that providing welfare to low-income families removes the motivation for citizens to be responsible for their own well-being. Conservatives favor a free enterprise system with limited government regulation in businesses.

In addition to having different views on economic policies, liberals and conservatives

also have different views on education and health care. Liberals believe that both education and health care should be subsidized by the government. They desire more federal funding in public schools, and they believe the government should be held responsible for assisting citizens who lack the financial ability to receive a higher education. Liberals also favor affirmative action to help minorities gain an advantage towards admission into a college or university. In addition, liberals have a tendency to support a national health care system. They want health care to be affordable and widely available to lower-income citizens.

Conservatives believe that the government should not further subsidize education and health care, and some conservatives even desire to remove the current funding of these programs. Conservatives tend to favor tax breaks that affect the funding of public schools, and they do not hold the government responsible for providing citizens with financial assistance for higher education. Conservatives consider affirmative action to be “reverse discrimination” and do not support it. They also favor the status quo of America’s health care system and believe that it is a citizen’s personal responsibility to obtain his or her own health insurance. Conservatives argue that a national health care system would require a high tax increase and a decrease in the quality of care.

As well as differing in opinions on education and health care, liberals and conservatives differ on most social issues. Liberals are very active in gaining government support and enforcement of civil rights. Liberals are very tolerant of free speech and public protests. They stand behind the Constitutional right to freedom of expression, despite whether or not they agree with what is being expressed. They firmly believe in protecting the rights of the accused with the Exclusionary Rule of the Fourth Amendment and the Miranda Rights of the Fifth Amendment. Liberals seek to eliminate crime by curing the economic and social causes behind

the crime. They encourage after-school programs and favor gun control in an effort to lower the crime rate. Liberals desire a clear separation of church and state. They are typically pro-choice on the abortion issue, and they support gay marriage and adoption rights for gay couples.

Conservatives, in contrast, do not strongly enforce or regulate civil rights. Conservatives are generally intolerant of exercises of free speech and protest that go against American family traditions. They favor law and order, and they view liberal freedom of expression as chaotic and dangerous. They firmly believe in protecting the rights of crime victims, and they often narrow the Exclusionary Rule and the Miranda Rights with both inevitable discovery and “clear and present danger.” Conservatives seek to eliminate crime with severe punishment. In addition to capital punishment, conservatives favor building more restricted prisons and granting fewer paroles. Conservatives desire support for faith-based political initiatives in government. They are typically pro-life on the abortion issue, and they support gaining a Constitutional amendment that defines marriage as a heterosexual union ordained by God.

Liberals and conservatives differ on economic policies, education and health care, and social issues. Liberals favor the working-class citizens and federal involvement, while conservatives favor upper-class Americans and individual self-reliance. Liberals are tolerant of free expression but lack traditional religious and family values. Conservatives are less tolerant of free expression and involve morality with policy. Liberals and conservatives clearly hold many different political views.