

A Sample of U.S. Political Groups: Where do they Stand on Key Issues?

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Democratic Socialists of America	Democrats	Republicans	Libertarians
Abortion			
Support reproductive freedom, including full access to safe and legal abortion (with no stigma) for all women. Repeal the Hyde Amendment.	Support abortion rights, but some have voted for the Hyde Amendment, which bars the use of federal funds to pay for abortion.	Most Republicans oppose abortions in all cases (including rape, incest, and when the mother's life is in danger).	Believe the question of abortion should be left to each person's "conscientious consideration," and government should be kept out of the matter.
Death Penalty			
Oppose the death penalty and call for fundamental change in prison system. (See Prisons.)	Oppose the death penalty, calling it cruel & unusual punishment, & noting racial bias in its application.	Mostly support the death penalty.	No official position.
Education			
Oppose privatization of schools. Support more resources for public schools and free college tuition at public universities for families making less than \$125,000.	Generally oppose privatization of schools and support more federal resources for public education. Are divided on how to solve college debt crisis.	Believe in limiting the role of the federal government in education. Support "school choice," "English first," and the end of federal loans for college.	Advocate free-market education where parents, teachers, and students, not the government, should make their own choices on education.
Free Trade			
Oppose free trade agreements that lead to loss of workers' and Indigenous rights and cause an increase in environmental hazards.	Support free trade agreements—including the Trans-Pacific Partnership—while upholding workers' rights and environmental standards.	Support the Trans-Pacific Partnership. Envision a multilateral agreement among nations committed to the principles of "open" international markets.	Oppose all intervention by government into the area of economics.
Gay, Lesbian, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Queer (GLBTQ) Equality			
Support equal rights for all LGBTQ people, including rights to housing, jobs, education, public accommodations, & healthcare.	Believe in equal protection under the law, including for LGBTQ people; support marriage equality.	Believe marriage is exclusively the union of one man and one woman. Do not support legal protections of GLBTQ rights.	Do not support gay marriage equality or legislation protecting GLBTQ rights.
Global Warming			
Seek to politically defeat the fossil fuel industry and its supporters and build a world economy based on renewable energy.	Believe climate change poses a real and urgent threat. Support reducing emissions and developing a renewable energy.	Skeptical of global warming science. Support ongoing production of coal, and drilling for oil and natural gas.	Do not support climate change treaties and do not want the government involved in regulating private enterprise or resources.
Health Care			
Support Medicare for All – single payer national health insurance, which would provide choice of doctors and hospitals and guaranteed treatment.	Support the Affordable Care Act, which requires individuals to purchase private health insurance (with some govt. assistance for those in need).	Believe individuals should purchase private health insurance and would repeal the Affordable Care Act.	Oppose any government role in the provision of health care. Favor a free market health care system.



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Housing			
Believe housing is a human right and support publicly owned housing, rent control, and ecologically built housing close to transit.	Support fair housing and fair lending laws. Want to provide more federal resources to increase the supply of affordable housing.	Are critical of fair housing and fair lending laws. Believe government should scale back involvement in providing affordable housing.	Leave all questions of housing supply, pricing, and access to the market.
Military Spending and National Security			
Oppose war, imperialism, and militarism; call for the removal of troops from Iraq; no war with (and lift sanctions on) Iran.	Are generally divided about whether to increase military spending or divert those funds to domestic programs.	Generally call for increases in military spending to support missile programs, troops, and technology that will combat terrorism.	Support maintenance of a sufficient military to defend the U.S. Believe the principle of non-intervention should guide relationships between countries.
Prisons and Criminal Justice			
Seek to abolish solitary confinement, cash bail, and pre-trial incarceration, ultimately working to abolish mass incarceration.	Have a mixed history of supporting a) policies that led to skyrocketing prison populations, and b) reforms that reduce bail and mandatory minimums in sentencing, etc.	Support stronger sentencing, and anti-crime law enforcement.	Want behavior that does not involve force or fraud legalized and dealt with outside the criminal justice system. Believe in shorter sentences and more rehabilitation.
Taxes			
Support progressive taxes (lower taxes for low-income and working people, higher taxes for wealthier people).	Want to extend tax cuts for the middle class and raise taxes on the wealthy while reforming the tax code.	Support tax cuts across the board. Oppose raising taxes on the wealthy. Encourage businesses, and private charity to make up for government spending.	Seek to lower all taxes by eliminating government services and leaving them to the private sector.
Voter Access			
Support full voting rights because democracy requires that the electorate reflect the nation's economic and racial diversity.	Want to expand access to the polls by ensuring open process, accessibility, and fair elections. Oppose voter ID legislation.	Support strict rules for voting such as requiring voters to have picture IDs. Some would repeal the 1965 Voter Rights Act.	Oppose laws that suppress voting.
Wages, Employment, and Economy			
Demand a living wage (pay that people can actually live on), and the Green New Deal, a massive jobs program that would address inequality and climate change.	Support increasing the minimum wage while also supporting small businesses, strengthening consumer protections, and promoting equal pay for women.	Generally oppose raising the minimum wage because wages should be set by the free market.	Oppose government regulation over wages or employment issues and support free market capitalism.

Cynthia Peters is editor of The Change Agent. Sources: <dsausa.org>; <healthcare.gop.com>; <www.dnc.org>; <www.lp.org>; <www.wikipedia.org>; <www.massdems.org>; <www.ctj.org>; and <www.ontheissues.org/>.

This “extra” was created to accompany Issue #50 of *The Change Agent*, “Stand Up and Be Counted,” published in March 2020 <changeagent.nelrc.org>.