

# Democrats vs. Republicans

## What's the difference?

### Democrats - a short summary

Democrats believe that the Federal Government is responsible for the care of all individuals, even if that means giving up some individual rights. Democrats generally support government policies that benefit working class families and seek more corporate regulation. They also favor a government that supports lower and middle-income families and workers through higher taxes for corporations and the wealthy. They support government entitlement programs such as social security and healthcare. In social matters, they believe that it is the responsibility of the family to promote morals and values in society and not the government's responsibility (this is usually labeled as socially liberal).

### Republicans - a short summary

Republicans tend to believe that everyone is responsible for their own place in society. They believe in limiting government intervention in our daily lives. They generally support government policies that benefit business, and seek less corporate regulation. Republicans believe that reducing corporate taxes and regulations will translate into lower unemployment rates. They would prefer to out-source government entitlement programs such as social security and healthcare to the private sector. They believe that most decisions should be made by the states and local authorities. They believe that the government should be actively involved with promoting morals and values in society (this is usually labeled as socially conservative).

### The Economy

Democrats believe that in order to have a strong economy, the government must promote policies that empower individual workers. These policies can include supporting unions, discouraging companies from exporting jobs overseas, and increasing the minimum wage. Democrats believe that companies must be regulated (to an extent) to ensure fair compensation and treatment of American workers, to prevent large corporations from abusing employees, and to reduce corporate fraud. In a broader sense, Democrats believe that it is better to stimulate the economy from the bottom-up (stimulating the worker) instead of from the top-down (stimulating corporations).

Republicans believe that government should promote a free-enterprise system where people are free to use their talents. They believe that the best path to a strong economy is by promoting policies that benefit businesses. Lower corporate taxes and reducing corporate regulation are policies that they believe will help stimulate the economy. Republicans believe that by reducing corporate taxes and regulation, American corporations will in turn hire more workers and increase wages. In a broader sense, Republicans prefer to stimulate the economy from the top-down (stimulating corporations) instead of from the bottom-up (stimulating the worker).

### Taxes

Democrats seek to reduce taxes for lower and middle-income families and small businesses. However, they seek to increase taxes for large corporations and the wealthy. It should be noted that increasing corporate taxes could cause layoffs. However, if taxes are reduced for lower and middle-income families, the majority of Americans will have more purchasing power that can in turn benefit corporations, off-setting any increase in taxes to corporate America. In general, Democrats seek tax breaks for lower and middle-income families and tax increases for large corporations and the wealthy.

Republicans seek to maintain the current tax rates for lower and middle-income families. They firmly believe that taxes on large corporations and the wealthy should be reduced in order to support the economy and job growth. In general, Republicans seek lower taxes for large corporations and the wealthy in order to maintain and promote a lower unemployment rate.

### Social Issues - Liberals vs. Conservatives

In general, Democrats are social liberals and believe that individual choice is a fundamental principle. Democrats seek out stronger privacy laws and support personal choice. Under this concept, people are responsible for the social choices

they make instead of the social choices that the government makes for them. Democrats believe that morals and values should be instilled by the family and not by the government. In a broader sense, Democrats prefer to foster positive morals and values in American society through personal responsibility, the family, and education. Typically, the label "socially liberal" is applied to this philosophy. However, it is also conservative in the sense that it is seeking a minimized role of government over the individual (a conservative concept).

In general, Republicans are social conservatives believe that it is a valid role of government to instill morals and values on the American population through legislation. They seek to protect what they see as the conservative or traditional way of life in America. In a broader sense, Republicans prefer to foster positive morals and values in American society through the government and legislation. Typically, this philosophy is considered "socially conservative" even though it advocates the liberal application of government on the individual.

### **Foreign Policy and National Security**

Democrats support active diplomacy between the United States and the world community. They believe in reducing the money spent on the military. They believe that having strong alliances is a key strategic advantage for the United States and its national security. Having strong alliances increases the ability of the United States to negotiate with other nations, to seek out agreements and treaties that are beneficial to the United States, and empower intelligence agencies such as the CIA. Democrats believe that war is always a valid option but should only be used as a last resort when other options have been exhausted. Democrats are not opposed to war when necessary. Woodrow Wilson (Democrat) lead the United States into World War I and Franklin Roosevelt (Democrat) lead the United States into World War II.

Republicans support a strong national defense. They believe that defending our nation against its enemies must be a fundamental commitment of the federal government and this requires the best-trained, best-equipped and most effective military in the world. Because America is considered a superpower in the world, Republicans believe that true security comes from the strength of character to either collaboratively with their allies, when possible, and alone when necessary. After 9-11 America's main goal is to fight terrorism abroad in order to prevent it at home.

### **Entitlements – Social Security, etc.**

Entitlements are programs that are offered to citizens by the government which are paid for by state and federal taxes. The major entitlement programs include healthcare, social security, and welfare.

Democrats believe that the government should continue to support and protect these programs by keeping them under the government umbrella. Democrats are against out-sourcing entitlement programs to the private sector in fear that corporate instability and greed will undermine them. Democrats believe it is the government's responsibility to provide Americans a basic level of healthcare, unemployment insurance (welfare), and retirement income (social security). Under this Democratic platform, the American worker pays for these entitlements through taxes. This is often called a "liberal" or "left-wing" economic policy. It is liberal because of the increased influence of government on these programs.

Republicans believe that the government should outsource the majority of entitlement programs to the private sector in order to reduce the government's spending and financial obligations to citizens. This includes healthcare, social security, and welfare. Republicans believe that the efficiencies of free markets will drive the cost of these programs down and their benefits up. Under this platform, healthcare (Medicare and Medicaid) is outsourced to health insurance companies and social security is outsourced to brokerage firms (Wall Street). The American worker would then pay for these entitlements either directly to corporations or through taxes which are then in turn sent to corporations. This is often called a "conservative" or "right-wing" economic policy. It is conservative because of the reduced influence of government on these programs.

### **Environment**

Democrats believe that the environment should be protected even if this raises costs for taxpayers and corporations. Democrats see the environment as an investment and a national asset that should be protected for the current and future generations. Policies that support the protection of the environment include tax credits for corporations that

reduce their pollution levels, adopting the Kyoto Protocol, and promoting green energy (wind farms, solar, and natural gas). Democrats believe that the costs are acceptable in order to reduce pollution and to protect the environment.

Republicans also believe that the environment should be protected but are generally against government policies and regulation and prefer to have corporations regulate themselves. Republicans see environmental regulation as a cost to American industry that could harm the economy. They believe that the Kyoto Protocol could reduce America's competitiveness in the global economy and therefore voted against it. Republicans seek environmental solutions from industry and typically don't favor government regulations that would penalize corporations and industries for their environmental record.

### **Other Issues**

**Education** – Democrats support an education system that is solidly funded and supported by the government. They believe that government funds should strictly be used for public schools and universities. Republicans believe that privatizing the education system will lead to a higher quality of education. They support using government funds to subsidize private schools to make them more financially competitive with public schools.

**Gun Control** - Democrats support the Second Amendment but also seek out government regulations that aim to lower crime rates by implementing stronger controls over the purchase of weapons. Republicans support the Second Amendment but typically limit their support on regulations over the purchase of weapons.

**Immigration** – Most Democrats support a "path to citizenship" for illegal immigrants. A key reason for supporting a path to citizenship is so immigrants can begin paying their fair share of taxes. Illegal immigrants don't pay taxes since they don't have social security numbers and are hired "off the books". Democrats believe that it is an unreasonable task and expense to deport the estimated 12 million illegal immigrants currently living and working in the United States. Republicans are mixed on this issue but tend to support stronger illegal immigration laws that include deporting illegal immigrants and a more difficult and expensive path to citizenship.

### **Government Spending**

Both Democrats and Republicans advertise themselves as fiscally conservative and both claim to want reduced government spending. However, both parties promote and support a massive government - they just differ on what to spend our tax dollars on. Democrats prefer to spend tax dollars internally - on programs that benefit public infrastructure and enterprises. Examples include investments in our transportation system, public education, and healthcare. Republicans prefer to spend tax dollars externally - on programs that benefit private corporations and countries overseas. Examples include using tax dollars to prevent large corporations from going bankrupt (corporate bailouts) and investments in infrastructure overseas (currently concentrated in Afghanistan and Iraq). In the long run, Democrats believe that internal investments will prove to be a better return-on-investment and Republicans believe that external investments will be a better return-on-investment.

### **Conclusion**

Neither party follows all of the core principles outlined above perfectly, that is why it is important to research each candidate's policies and ideas regardless of their political affiliation. You must also question what you believe the role of government to be. Each philosophy has its pros and cons and neither one is perfect, that is why it is important to review each philosophy closely and to decide which one you think is best. Keep in mind that regardless of the candidate you vote for, it will be difficult for the candidate to change the core principles and philosophies of his or her party, so you are not only voting for the individual candidate, but also the candidate's party and its philosophies.

Democrats	vs	Republicans
Democrat	...	Republican
DNC	...	GOP
Blue	...	Red
Donkey	...	Elephant
Left	...	Right
Progressive	...	Conservative