

# Liberal and conservative view about the role of government

Government



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As long as there have been politics in the United States, there has been a productive tension between liberal views and conservative views. These differences are most clearly demonstrated by the disparate views on subjects such as education, taxes and public healthcare. Liberals and conservatives have different views about the role of government.

While liberals; currently represented by the Democratic Party; and conservatives; currently represented by the Republican Party; both believe that education, tax policy, and public health are important issues for the United States; they have different beliefs about the best approach for these policies. Liberals tend towards policies that empower the central government through large all encompassing programs. On the other hand, conservatives prefer locally run programs that are not the same in all communities but may produce results more consistent with community preferences.

Currently, no topic provides a better example of the difference between conservatives and liberals than education policy. The liberal belief is that education policy is best when dictated from Washington D. C. with federal education subsidies contingent upon state and local government compliance with federal mandates. Conservatives believe that federal money should not be based on specific agendas developed in Washington D. C. but instead should be granted to state and local governments in the form of grants.

These grants do not have strings attached and can be used for state and local education priorities. Conservatives and Liberals also disagree about where education dollars should be spent. The liberal view is that children should go to public schools regardless of quality, they believe that public

education efforts and money should be directed towards public schools.

Conversely, conservatives believe that children in non-performing schools should have the option to go to private school at public expense.

Their view is that competition between public and private schools will improve both. Nobody likes tax time. Liberals and Conservatives both agree that taxes are unavoidable. Their beliefs about the use of taxes and tax policy are very different, though. Liberals seem to believe that taxes are a federal entitlement. They believe that tax money should be spent by the government on large government programs that provide services to people instead of by the taxpayer themselves.

Furthermore, liberals believe that tax policy should be used to provide wealth distribution from the rich to the poor. This is most clearly demonstrated by the Earned Income Credit (EIC); the EIC is a tax provision that allows people to receive more in tax refunds than were paid in actual taxes. Conservatives on the other hand truly view taxes as a tool to provide for the common good; they differ from liberals in their approach. They believe that free market forces can more efficiently run large programs than the government can.

They believe that large government programs are not inherently productive and taxpayers should be given wide latitude about the use of their money for services that directly affect them. Healthcare is another area where conservatives and liberals find very little common ground. Both sides agree that everyone needs health care, but they disagree what the government's responsibility should be. Liberals believe that it is the government's

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responsibility to provide cradle to grave health care. They believe this should be provided by government regulated quasi-HMO organizations funded by tax dollars.

Conservatives think that the government has limited health care responsibility. They believe that the government should provide tax incentives to people so they can buy their health insurance; additionally, they believe that the government should provide limited health care to the poor and the aged. Two statements can best sum up the differences between conservatives and liberals. Conservatives believe in limited government and that government's responsibility is to create an economy and environment where people can earn decent wages thereby making them self-sufficient.

Liberals believe government's responsibility is to provide for the people and conversely, the people should provide for the government. The truly interesting thing is that the extreme conservatism or fascism and extreme liberalism or communism, have both fallen into disfavor in the last few decades. I believe that this country was founded on conservative principles. Conservatives and liberals have very different views about the way this country should be run and the role of government, which everyone should listen to carefully.