

# Perception of politics in the united states



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Are you happy with the United States political environment right now?

Pew Research says that 77% of Americans are not. Aristotle was a great Greek philosopher and he thought of politics as “ The center for human debate and theory”. Do the citizens of the United States value politics in the same way Aristotle envisioned? As humans of the world, politics should be a safe place where tough decisions are made by the people. Political issues should be discussed in the open, with ethics at the forefront. At the end of reading this, you will understand why politics should be focused on ethics, and the “ issues” should be ethical dilemmas that we can all agree need to be fixed.

The modern word ‘ political’ is derived from the Greek word ‘ *politikos* ‘. The Greeks believed that politics, religion, and culture were intertwined . Greek ‘city - states’, like Athens and Sparta, architected their infrastructure after this idea. Creating town epicenters where political debate could take place as theatre, and social events could be held to discuss ethical issues. Aristotle believed that politics should be used as a practical science, enriching all citizen’s lives in a transparent way. Aristotle’s ideas about politics formed the foundation of today’s Political Scientists. Political Science is a study of the tasks a politician must undertake. Put yourself in the shoes of a political scientist; How hard are the problems that politicians are responsible for today? How would you advise them to solve those problems? These critical questions must be asked by the citizens of the United States in order to empathize with politicians, and ultimately progress as a country.

To help myself understand what the current perception of politics in America, I asked members of my family two questions: 1) What is your perception of

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politics in the United States? 2) Regardless of that perception, what things would you change about politics in the United States? My side of the family is very right wing, republican, and pro trump. My wife's side is very left wing, democrat, and pro Obama. The range of answers I received was wide, but they mostly had a common theme; " America is doing just fine, but we want fair treatment and inclusion for all citizens".

Let's start with the first question. Right side responses were mostly positive, stating that the country is trending upwards and things actually getting done by politicians. Left side responses were positive as well, stating that government has a good system of checks and balances in place, but that it is being tested. Both sides have an overall positive view of our country. I did have outlier responses however. One family member who identifies as a republican stated their current perception of politics is corruption and intolerance. They would like to see transparency and accountability for actions taken by government officials. Another family member who identifies as democrat noted that their current perception of politics has not changed almost their entire life, no matter the president. They advocated for the importance of local government and the affect it has on our lives.

The responses to the second question were much farther from each other on the right and left. Right side responses mainly focused on term limits for all politicians. They want a constant cycle of politicians so that we don't have career politicians, and so that we can have a steady turnover and broad representation. Left side responses varied from each other. One member saying they wouldn't change anything because we have adequate checks

and balances in place to handle problems. Another member advocating for citizen's proactivity in politics, wanting to make it a holiday on election days, and encourage people to get involved in local government.

These responses to my inquiries are interesting. During their interviews, most family members stated that they want the division between our country fixed. It's interesting that the overall theme of their responses was similar. Maybe if we all took an approach similar to what Aristotle suggests, making politics the center of our cultural lives, we would be able to understand each other better, and put aside social differences to focus on ethical issues. Social Issues divide the country; ethical issues unite us all.

Ethics is defined as 'moral principles that govern a person's behavior or the conducting of an activity'. Political issues usually come in two different types; Ethical, or Social. Social issues are things like: "Should we give more funding to inner city schools?" or "Would incentivizing diverse business hires improve our economy?".

Whereas ethical issues are things like: "Do we need to act on climate change?" or "Should women be allowed to choose when they receive an abortion?". The difference is simply this: Ethical issues deal with what is right, Social issues deal with improving a specific part of society. Are you starting to understand why Aristotle says that Ethics should be the core of politics?

Aristotle wanted politics to be used for the happiness of man, he says 'The science that studies the supreme good for man, is politics' (Living Ethics, 92). The 'Supreme Good' is often referred to as ethics in today's culture.

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Aristotle believed that ethical issues should be the center of politics. I believe if we focus on ethics and combine cultural aspects into local political discussion, the social issues can be solved by the people, while ethical issues could be solved by the government. Ethical issues are usually the most debated problems. Some examples of ethical issues today are: Poverty, Education, Immigration, Sentencing, Environment, and Climate Change. Both left and right politics have strong views on how these ethical dilemmas should be handled, but both sides agree that they are in fact problems that need to be addressed.

What do you want from government? As a citizen of the United States, I want government to solve ethical problems while taking input from citizen representatives. As a member of society, I would like to see more social outreach and involvement from everyone so that we may come together to solve social issues. As humans of the world, politics should be a safe place where tough decisions are made by the people. Political issues should be discussed in the open, with ethics at the forefront. Aristotle believed in this, and so do the citizens of the United States today.