

Salt of the Street Judicial Branch

Court of Opinion

Dissenting Opinion: Policy Over Party

It is no secret that our country has become increasingly partisan since the inauguration of Barak Obama and even more so since that of Donald Trump. One of the many side effects that I have seen come from this has been the focus on the title of Republican or Democrat. It has been this way forever, even when the titles meant something completely different than they do now, but it seems that the focus on the political affiliation has intensified. Maybe it is the approaching mid terms and the assumed 'blue wave' that Offie discussed a few weeks ago but either way I think this focus on political affiliation is particularly misplaced.

It's a personal stance of mine that the party that someone is running through shouldn't matter. The policies are what should matter. I have spoken many times about Colin and I trying to do our best to be objective, but that has been and continues to be a very long and incredibly tricky path. When we first started talking I distinctly remember Offie and I discovering Kamala Harris for the first time, who is a Democratic Senator from California. The part that I remember so clearly is him telling me he already didn't like her, because she was a Democratic Senator from California, something no one would ever catch him

saying now. We sat down at lunch and went over her record of voting and we both quickly realized she was much more moderate than either of us had assumed. This was one of the early events that still sticks with me and helps me stay on the more moderate path of objectivity.

When I try and look at the political system objectively I see the parties as more of a way to get your foot in the door than a set of ideals you are selecting. As you may or may not know it is very difficult to try and run for an elected office in an efficient or meaningful manner without belonging to one of the two major political parties, but within that exists an immense amount of wiggle room. From being a democratic socialist as Bernie Sanders has described himself or new Congressman Conor Lamb, who while he ran as a democrat was considered by many to be conservative. I believe that this loose interpretation of the parties is what the founders intended and is what allows anyone in this country to be able to find a place to fit and have an opportunity to run.

That being said, I am registered as an independent. Because, to be honest, at the time I didn't want to have to decide and now I don't feel at home in either party to decide but intend to before the next presidential election. As I said before I see the parties as a way to get your foot in the door, and I

think the letter before someone name is better left to be considered by those who count votes on the hill, but even then, the “R” or “D” does not always decide the way a congressman votes.

With all of this I believe the focus on political parties is confused, and I would urge everyone, with the coming mid-term elections and the 2020 presidential elections, to look passed what party any particular candidate is running under or what they think it might say about them to be voting a particular way. Instead, I hope that we will all watch the debates and read the articles and stances with open ears and minds and hear what the candidates have to say and allow that to color our opinions instead of what committee will be selecting them as their candidate. The core ideal of this overreaches to my expectations of our leaders, to vote for the country and not for the party.

I believe that this is something everyone should hold dear. I hold true that it is a civic and patriotic duty to vote and to do so informedly, and I believe that being informed means looking past what part of the ballot someone’s name is on. This will take work and like the path to objectivity it will be treacherous, but I truly believe this is a required step in the process of reforming the political parties to ensure the continuation of the greatest test the world has ever seen - the American Experiment.