

POLSC302: Political Ideologies: A Comparison—Answer Key

Issue	Conservatism	Liberalism	Libertarianism
Election and Campaign Reform	<p>“Preventing voting fraud is a civil rights issue. We support the right of states to require an official government-issued photo identification for voting and call upon the Department of Justice to deploy its resources to prevent ballot tampering in the November elections. We support efforts by state and local election officials to ensure integrity in the voting process and to prevent voter fraud and abuse, particularly as it relates to voter registration and absentee ballots.” (p. 21, 2008 Republican Party Platform)</p>	<p>“We will fully fund the Help America Vote Act and work to fulfill the promise of election reform, including fighting to end long lines at voting booths and ensuring that all registration materials, voting materials, polling places, and voting machines are truly accessible to seniors, Americans with disabilities, and citizens with limited English proficiency. We will call for a national standard for voting that includes voter verified paper ballots. We will ensure that absentee ballots are accessible and accurately counted. We will vigorously enforce our voting rights laws instead of making them tools of partisan political agendas; we oppose laws that require identification in order to vote or register to vote, which create discriminatory barriers to the right to vote and disenfranchise many eligible voters; and we oppose tactics which purge eligible voters</p>	<p>“We support electoral systems that are more representative of the electorate at the federal, state and local levels. As private voluntary groups, political parties should be allowed to establish their own rules for nomination procedures, primaries and conventions. We call for an end to any tax-financed subsidies to candidates or parties and the repeal of all laws which restrict voluntary financing of election campaigns. We oppose laws that effectively exclude alternative candidates and parties, deny ballot access, gerrymander districts, or deny the voters their right to consider all legitimate alternatives.” (http://www.lp.org/platform)</p>



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		<p>from voter rolls. We are committed to passing the Count Every Vote Act. Finally, we will enact legislation that establishes harsh penalties for those who engage in voter intimidation and creates a process for providing accurate information to misinformed voters so they can cast their votes in time.” (p. 55, 2008 Democratic Party Platform)</p>	
<p>Education Reform</p>	<p>“We reaffirm the principles that have been the foundation of the nation’s educational progress toward that goal: accountability for student academic achievement; periodic testing on the fundamentals of learning; transparency, so parents and the general public know which schools best serve their students; and flexibility and freedom to innovate so schools and districts can best meet the needs of their students. We advocate policies and methods that are proven and</p>	<p>“We must ensure that every student has a high-quality teacher and an effective principal. That starts with recruiting a new generation of teachers and principals by making this pledge—if you commit your life to teaching, America will commit to paying for your college education. We’ll provide better preparation, mentoring and career ladders. Where there are teachers who are still struggling and underperforming we should provide them with individual help and support. To reward</p>	<p>“Education, like any other service, is best provided by the free market, achieving greater quality and efficiency with more diversity of choice. Schools should be managed locally to achieve greater accountability and parental involvement. Recognizing that the education of children is inextricably linked to moral values, we would return authority to parents to determine the education of their children, without interference from government. In particular, parents should have control of and responsibility for all funds expended for their children’s education.” (http://www.lp.org/platform)</p>



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	<p>effective: building on the basics, especially phonics; ending social promotion; merit pay for good teachers; classroom discipline; parental involvement; and strong leadership by principals. We reject a one-size-fits-all approach and support parental options, including home schooling, and local innovations such as schools or classes for boys only or for girls only and alternative and innovative school schedules. We recognize and appreciate the importance of innovative education environments, particularly homeschooling, for stimulating academic achievement. We oppose over-reaching judicial decisions which deny children access to such environments.” (p. 43, 2008 Republican Party Platform)</p>	<p>our teachers, we will follow the lead of school districts and educators that have pioneered innovative ways to increase teacher pay that are developed with teachers, not imposed on them. We will make an unprecedented national investment to provide teachers with better pay and better support to improve their skills, and their students’ learning. We’ll reward effective teachers who teach in underserved areas, take on added responsibilities like mentoring new teachers, or consistently excel in the classroom. We will fix the failures of No Child Left Behind—while holding to the goal of providing every child access to a world-class education, raising standards, and ensuring accountability for closing the achievement gap. We will end the practice of labeling a school and its students as failures and then throwing our hands up and walking away from them without having provided the</p>	



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		<p>resources and supports these students need. We will work with our nation's governors and educators to create and use assessments that will improve student learning and success in school districts all across America by including the kinds of critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving skills that our children will need. We will address the dropout crisis by investing in intervention strategies in middle schools and high schools and we will invest in after-school programs, summer school, alternative education programs, and youth jobs. We will promote innovation within our public schools. We need to adapt curricula to the needs of the 21st century; reform the schools of education that produce most of our teachers; promote public charter schools that are accountable; and streamline the certification process for those with valuable skills who want to shift careers and teach." (p.</p>	



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		19, 2008 Democratic Party Platform)	
Gay Rights	<p>“Republicans have been at the forefront of protecting traditional marriage laws, both in the states and in Congress. A Republican Congress enacted the Defense of Marriage Act, affirming the right of states not to recognize same-sex ‘marriages’ licensed in their states. Unbelievably, the Democratic Party has now pledged to repeal the Defense of Marriage Act, which would subject every state to the redefinition of marriage by a judge without ever allowing the people to vote on the matter. We also urge Congress to use its Article III, Section 2 power to prevent activist federal judges from imposing upon the rest of the nation the judicial activism in Massachusetts and</p>	<p>“It is not enough to look back in wonder at how far we have come; those who came before us did not strike a blow against injustice only so that we would allow injustice to fester in our time. That means removing the barriers of prejudice and misunderstanding that still exist in America. We support the full inclusion of all families, including same-sex couples, in the life of our nation, and support equal responsibility, benefits, and protections. We will enact a comprehensive bipartisan employment non-discrimination act. We oppose the Defense of Marriage Act and all attempts to use this issue to divide us.” (p. 52, 2008 Democratic Party Platform)</p>	<p>“Sexual orientation, preference, gender, or gender identity should have no impact on the government's treatment of individuals, such as in current marriage, child custody, adoption, immigration or military service laws. Government does not have the authority to define, license or restrict personal relationships. Consenting adults should be free to choose their own sexual practices and personal relationships.” (http://www.lp.org/platform)</p>



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	California. We also encourage states to review their marriage and divorce laws in order to strengthen marriage.” (p. 53, 2008 Republican Party Platform)		
Gun Control	“We uphold the right of individual Americans to own firearms, a right which antedated the Constitution and was solemnly confirmed by the Second Amendment. We assert the individual responsibility to safely use and store firearms. We call on the next president to appoint judges who will similarly respect the Constitution. Gun ownership is responsible citizenship, enabling Americans to defend themselves, their property, and communities.” (p. 51, 2008 Republican Party Platform)	“We recognize that the right to bear arms is an important part of the American tradition, and we will preserve Americans’ Second Amendment right to own and use firearms. We believe that the right to own firearms is subject to reasonable regulation, but we know that what works in Chicago may not work in Cheyenne. We can work together to enact and enforce commonsense laws and improvements—like closing the gun show loophole, improving our background check system, and reinstating the assault weapons ban, so that guns do not fall into the hands of terrorists or criminals. Acting responsibly and with respect for differing views on this issue, we can both protect the	“Libertarians, like other Americans, want to be able to walk city streets safely and be secure in their homes. We also want our Constitutional rights protected, to guard against the erosion of our civil liberties. In particular, Libertarians want to see all people treated equally under the law, as our constitution requires. America’s millions of gun owners are people too. Law-abiding, responsible citizens do not and should not need to ask anyone’s permission or approval to engage in a peaceful activity. Gun ownership, by itself, harms no other person and cannot morally justify criminal penalties. Rather than banning guns, the politicians and the police should encourage gun ownership, as well as education and training programs. A responsible, well-armed and trained citizenry is the best protection against domestic crime and the threat of foreign invasion.” (http://www.lp.org/issues/gun-laws)



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		<p>constitutional right to bear arms and keep our communities and our children safe.” (p. 48, 2008 Democratic Party Platform)</p>	
Capital Punishment	<p>“Courts must have the option of imposing the death penalty in capital murder cases and other instances of heinous crime, while federal review of those sentences should be streamlined to focus on claims of innocence and to prevent delaying tactics by defense attorneys.” (p. 48, 2008 Republican Party Platform)</p>	<p>“We believe that the death penalty must not be arbitrary. DNA testing should be used in all appropriate circumstances, defendants should have effective assistance of counsel. In all death row cases, and thorough post conviction reviews should be available.” (p. 51, 2008 Democratic Party Platform)</p>	N/A
Abortion	<p>“We support a human life amendment to the Constitution, and we endorse legislation to make clear that the Fourteenth Amendment’s protections apply to unborn children. We oppose using public revenues to promote or perform abortion and will not fund organizations which advocate it. We support the appointment of judges who</p>	<p>“The Democratic Party strongly and unequivocally supports <i>Roe v. Wade</i> and a woman’s right to choose a safe and legal abortion, regardless of ability to pay, and we oppose any and all efforts to weaken or undermine that right.” (p. 50, 2008 Democratic Party Platform)</p>	<p>“Recognizing that abortion is a sensitive issue and that people can hold good-faith views on all sides, we believe that government should be kept out of the matter, leaving the question to each person for their conscientious consideration.” (http://www.lp.org/platform)</p>



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	<p>respect traditional family values and the sanctity and dignity of innocent human life.” (p. 52, 2008 Republican Party Platform)</p>		
<p>Climate Change</p>	<p>“Republicans caution against the doomsday climate change scenarios peddled by the aficionados of centralized command-and-control government. We can address the risk of climate change based on sound science without succumbing to the no-growth radicalism that treats climate questions as dogma rather than as situations to be managed responsibly. A robust economy will be essential to dealing with the risk of climate change, and we will insist on reasonable policies that do not force Americans to sacrifice their way of life or trim their hopes and dreams for their children.” (p. 36, 2008 Republican Party Platform)</p>	<p>“Global climate change is the planet’s greatest threat, and our response will determine the very future of life on this earth. Despite the efforts of our current Administration to deny the science of climate change and the need to act, we still believe that America can be earth’s best hope. We will implement a market-based cap and trade system to reduce carbon emissions by the amount scientists say is necessary to avoid catastrophic change and we will set interim targets along the way to ensure that we meet our goal. We will invest in advanced energy technologies, to build the clean energy economy and create millions of new, good “Green Collar” American jobs. Because the environment is a truly global concern, the</p>	<p>“Government, both federal and local, is the greatest single polluter in the U.S. This polluter literally gets away with murder because of sovereign immunity. Libertarians would make government as responsible for its actions as everyone else is expected to be. Libertarians would protect the environment by first abolishing sovereign immunity.” (http://www.lp.org/issues/environment)</p>



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		<p>United States must be a leader in combating climate change around the world, including exporting climate-friendly technologies to developing countries. We will use innovative measures to dramatically improve the energy efficiency of buildings, including establishing a grant program for early adopters and providing incentives for energy conservation. We will encourage local initiatives, sustainable communities, personal responsibility, and environmental stewardship and education nationwide.” (pp. 46–47, 2008 Democratic Party Platform)</p>	
Health Care Reform	<p>“Republicans support the private practice of medicine and oppose socialized medicine in the form of a government-run universal health care system. Radical restructuring of health care would be unwise. We will continue to advocate for simplification of the system and the empowerment of</p>	<p>“Ensuring quality, affordable health care for every single American is essential to children’s education, workers’ productivity and businesses’ competitiveness. We believe that covering all is not just a moral imperative, but is necessary to making our health system workable and affordable. Doing so would</p>	<p>“Health insurance costs are skyrocketing. Government health programs are heading for bankruptcy. Politicians continue to pile on the regulations. The Libertarian Party knows the only healthcare reforms that will make a real difference are those that draw on the strength of the free market. The LP will work towards...establishing medical savings accounts, deregulating the</p>



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	<p>patients. This is in stark contrast to the other party's insistence on putting Washington in charge of patient care, which has blocked any progress on meeting these goals." (pp. 37–38, 2008 Republican Party Platform)</p>	<p>end cost-shifting from the uninsured, promote prevention and wellness, stop insurance discrimination, help eliminate health care disparities, and achieve savings through competition, choice, innovation, and higher quality care. We therefore oppose those who advocate policies that would thrust millions of Americans out of their current private employer-based coverage without providing them access to an affordable, comprehensive alternative, thereby subjecting them to the kind of insurance discrimination that leads to excessive premiums or coverage denials for older and sicker Americans. We reject those who have steadfastly opposed insurance coverage expansions for millions of our nation's children while they have protected overpayments to insurers and allowed underpayments to our nation's doctors. Our vision of a strengthened and improved</p>	<p>healthcare industry, and removing barriers to safe, affordable medicines." (http://www.lp.org/issues/healthcare)</p>



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		health care system for all Americans stands in stark contrast to the Republican Party.” (p. 10, 2008 Democratic Party Platform)	
Social Security	“We are committed to putting Social Security on a sound fiscal basis. Under the current system, younger workers will not be able to depend on Social Security as part of their retirement plan. We believe the solution should give workers control over, and a fair return on, their contributions. No changes in the system should adversely affect any current or near-retiree. Comprehensive reform should include the opportunity to freely choose to create your own personal investment accounts which are distinct from and supplemental to the overall Social Security system.” (p. 19, 2008 Republican Party Platform)	“We reject the notion of the presumptive Republican nominee that Social Security is a disgrace; we believe that it is indispensable. We will fulfill our obligation to strengthen Social Security and to make sure that it provides guaranteed benefits Americans can count on, now and in future generations. We will not privatize it.” (pp. 13–14, 2008 Democratic Party Platform)	“We believe you should be able to opt out of Social Security and invest your money in your own personal retirement account. An account that you own and control—one that politicians can't get their hands on.” (http://www.lp.org/issues/social-security)

