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Party Polarization in American Government

Party polarization has become increasingly relevant in today's government. In recent years race, culture and ideologies have become especially divisive in American society. Voters are often affiliated with a political party and vote for the candidate of that party.

Political polarization is the way in which a person's views on certain issues, policies, or a government official is defined by the political party that they associate themselves with. This type of divisiveness affects not only the government but society as well. Differing political views cause high tension among citizens and translate over into family matters (Pearson). A survey showed that many citizens would be upset and even angered if a close family member were to marry someone of a different political affiliation other than their own (Barber 23). Young people tend to vote how their parents vote. Meaning, if an individual was raised in a Republican home, they are more likely to vote for a Republican candidate over a Democratic one.

Party platforms convey to voters what each party hopes to accomplish if they were to be elected to office. It explains what the general beliefs and morals of that party and gives voters the opportunity to see who and what they are voting for. People who are pro-life would generally vote Republican whereas someone who is pro-choice would tend to vote Democratic.

Democrat's tend to be more progressive than liberals and want to advance welfare programs and federal support. Republicans have remained conservative in their beliefs and are more interested

in amping up defense and infrastructure than using tax dollars to fund programs such as Obamacare and welfare (Pearson). Views vary from party to party, the platforms give voters the opportunity to establish their beliefs and vote accordingly based on which party they most closely identify with.

Partisan polarization has proven difficult to deal with in the federal government because it so largely divides people and makes legislation hard to pass. Filibusters are used by both houses of Congress to prevent a bill from advancement when there is a disagreement on either the bill as a whole or a section of the bill that someone deems unfair (Barber 28). Members of Congress remain divided because they want to remain a good advocate of their constituents but they also have to work with other members of Congress. There is often a lot of compromise when a piece of legislation is in the process of getting approval (Pearson). If no one was willing to compromise then no work would ever get done and there would be no advancements or improvements to the federal government.

America is a two-party system, and it always has been. The two leading parties are Democrats and Republicans. There are other, third parties but they rarely ever get elected into high ranking government positions (Barber 37). Democrats and Republicans have different moral and ethical views, this often poses a problem when there is a bill trying to be implemented (Pearson). Polarization can have a very negative effect on approval ratings. Because of all of the disagreements legislation gets slowed down and often thrown out. In May 2013 only one in six American's approved of Congress and the work they had done (Barber 18). Those numbers are staggeringly low and they reflect very poorly on the work that the American government is doing. Thomas Jefferson warned against political factions in his Federalist papers because he

knew that it would divide the country and cause major issues (Pearson). While it is good to have parties because of the differing views of all American's it also presents many problems in government.

Political parties are a very important part of today's government and they will remain to be for years to come. An individual's beliefs and values determine whether they identify as Republican, Democratic, or Independent. Generally people will vote for the candidate that their party has put up even if they do not necessarily agree with everything that candidate wants to accomplish. Political polarization has caused great divide in America government and stalls advancements form being made.

Works Cited

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