

## **Tax Policy**

Both parties favor tax cuts, but the Democrats believe there should only be cuts for middle and low income families, not for wealthy individuals or corporations. The Republicans believe there should be tax cuts for everyone, both corporations and people of all income levels.

## **Social Issues**

One of the major differences between democrats and republicans is their views towards social issues. The Republicans tend to be conservative on social issues. They tend to oppose gay marriage and promote marriage being between a man and a woman. They also oppose abortion and promote the right of gun ownership. Democrats tend to be more progressive in their views, favoring abortion and gay marriage, but are strongly for strict gun control laws that limit ownership.

## **Labor and Free Trade**

Republicans and Democrats have very different ideas when it comes to the business environment. Republicans tend to oppose increases to the minimum

wage, citing the need for business to keep costs low so they can prosper and all Americans can have access to products and services. The Democrats favor increasing the minimum wage so that Americans have more money with which to purchase goods. They also favor trade restrictions to protect American jobs while Republicans favor free trade in order to keep costs low for consumers and make businesses more profitable so they can grow.

## **Health Care**

Democrats generally prefer a lot of government regulation and oversight of the health care system, including the passage of the Affordable Care Act, because it makes the health care system accessible to everyone.

Republicans, who opposed the Affordable Care Act, believe too much government involvement in the industry will drive up costs and have a negative impact on the quality of care that consumers receive.

## **Social Programs**

Democrats across the board believe that government should run such social programs as welfare, unemployment benefits, food stamps, and Medicaid that support people in need. They believe more tax dollars should be funneled into these programs. Republicans acknowledge a need for these social programs, but favor less funding and tighter control. Republicans favor supporting private organizations that support people in need.

## **Foreign Policy**

When it comes to differences between democrats and republicans, the foreign policy cannot be missed. Each party has had differing stances in relation to foreign policy over the years depending on the situation. Generally speaking, when military involvement may be required, the Democrats favor more targeted strikes and limited use of manpower while Republicans favor a full military effort to displace regimes that are totalitarian and detrimental to their own people and who are threatening others. Both parties typically agree that sending aid to other countries is a good thing, but disagree on the nature of that aid and who should be receiving it.

## **Energy Issues and the Environment**

There have always been clashes between the parties on the issues of energy and the environment. Democrats believe in restricting drilling for oil or other avenues of fossil fuels to protect the environment while Republicans favor expanded drilling to produce more energy at a lower cost to consumers. Democrats will push and support with tax dollars alternative energy solutions while the Republicans favor allowing the market to decide which forms of energy are practical.

## **Education**

The parties have different views on the education system of the country, but both agree there needs a change. Democrats favor more progressive approaches to education, such as implementing the Common Core System, while Republicans tend to favor more conservative changes such as longer hours and more focused programs. They are also divided on student loans for college, with Democrats favoring giving students more money in the form of loans and grants while Republicans favor promoting the private sector giving loans and not the government.

## **Crime and Capital Punishment**

Republicans generally believe in harsher penalties when someone has committed a crime, including for selling illegal drugs. They also generally favor capital punishment and back a system with many layers to ensure the proper punishment has been meted out. Democrats are more progressive in their views, believing that crimes do not involve violence, such as selling drugs, should have lighter penalties and rehabilitation. They are also against capital punishment in any form.

## **Individual Liberty**

Individual liberty has been a sore subject of late. Political correctness is on the rise and many people believe that people need to be protected against themselves. Democrats have tended toward favoring legislation that restricts some freedoms, including foods we may have access to. Republicans favor personal responsibility, in that individuals should be able to choose for themselves what they do and what they do not do if it doesn't break existing laws.

Info from:

<http://www.enkivillage.com/differences-between-democrats-and-republicans.html> and modified for ESL class level readers by V. Jones