

Personal Politics

My Beliefs, My Party

Megan Harpole

My parents were Republicans. Their friends are Republicans. Everyone I was associated with was Republican. I just assumed that I was one too. It was not until the 2008 Presidential elections that I began to question the assumption of my political beliefs. I decided to take a closer look at the candidates because this was the first election I could vote in. I knew that within a two week span, both Barack Obama and Sarah Palin would be speaking in local assemblies. I decided that this would be a good opportunity for me to listen to both candidates and to determine for myself what I liked and did not like about their stances.

The first speaker was Sarah Palin. Her speech was dry and had reusable jokes that I had heard before from her. She did not speak about policies or issues. Even afterwards, I was still unclear about what McCain's plan for the Second Gulf War, or the war in Iraq, and for the economy. She did not speak once about the issues, but brought up Plumber Joe and a pit bull with lipstick. I did not feel that she would have the maturity or experience that is needed for a Vice President. That night, I had to look up McCain's stance of these issues just to gain a little information.

The second assembly was a speech given by Obama. Just the overall atmosphere was different and from the very first sentence, I was hooked. For the first time, I heard a candidate talk about issue, that not only were important to me, but that I also agreed with. The issue that stood out the most in my mind was that Obama wanted to end the Second Gulf War and to remove our troops from Iraq. My brother was



stationed in Iraq at the time, and I saw this as the opportunity to bring him home safely.

I did some research

concerning both candidates and their parties and what I discovered surprised me. Not only did I agree with what Obama was promising, but my own personal beliefs were closer to the Democratic Party than the

Republican Party. It is important for each person to research the parties without any personal bias. Let your own personal beliefs influence your beliefs and not those around you.

Family Ties

Christina Leavitt

My dad always listened to the news. He'd cruise the desert roads in his red truck with different commentators voicing their loud opinions. He'd grunt occasionally or make a comment, but I didn't pay too much attention on these drives. As a young kid, I was more interested in my childish fantasies than I was with what was going on between Clinton and Monica Lewinsky. However, that was fine with my dad. The news was a solitary activity for him and he disliked it when people interrupted him with questions if it wasn't on a commercial break.

As a teenager, I became more and more aware of the bigger world outside of my small Idaho town. My dad had



passed away by this time and I had forgotten which stations he'd listened to or which party he'd even belonged to. I felt that if I became politically informed it would somehow bring me just a little bit closer to the man I lost. I felt that way about most things that were important to my dad. My eldest sister had become the proxy dad of our family. She recommended a few conservative news sources for me to listen to. However, the more I listened the more I realized that I didn't fit into any political box. When it came time for me to register I checked the Independent box so I could feel liberated to vote however I saw fit without tying loyalties to any party. Even though I do not belong to the same party as my dad, I choose to be informed, just as he was.

