

www.LiberalOrConservativeQuiz.org
(Quiz Answers are in Brackets: [Conservative] or [Liberal])

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Quiz Version 1.0

1	Abortion
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A. [Conservative] Most abortions today are performed for personal inconvenience reasons or family planning reasons, with little weight given to moral considerations or the rights of the fetus. Society has a duty to regulate abortions because a fetus is not “A woman’s body” but a distinct being “IN a woman’s body.” As a baby-in-development soon to enjoy all the rights endowed to every human being, a fetus deserves some legal protections against a mother who would offer it none. What happens to a human fetus is of considerably greater consequence to society than what a woman does with what is truly just her own body (skin, hair, teeth, etc.). It goes against logic and morality to claim that if a woman wants to carry a fetus to term, her fetus is infinitely precious; but, if a woman wants to have an abortion, her fetus has no moral worth. A fetus either does or doesn’t have inherent worth, regardless of a woman’s wishes. Abortion should certainly be allowed in some cases (rape, incest, in the case of specific potential birth defects, and when the life of the mother is at risk), but allowing all abortions regardless of the reason because the fetus is not yet viable—that is immoral. In general, abortions should be discouraged, and when an abortion is contemplated, a woman should be informed about the adoption option.

B. [Liberal] The difficult decision whether to have an abortion revolves around highly personal considerations that are best left for the woman involved, rather than society as a whole. The rights of a pregnant woman pertaining to her pregnancy clearly outweigh the interests society might have in her pregnancy. Government should not be allowed to put any pressure on a pregnant woman to endure the course of pregnancy and carry her fetus to term. If a woman decides in her sole judgment that abortion is the best course for her life, she should have the right to have her pregnancy terminated up until the point of viability (and in some cases, even after). A woman is in the best position to know how pregnancy will affect her mentally, emotionally, and physically, and what effect carrying a fetus to term will have on her life and well-being—and the future life of her baby. A woman should be given convenient, publicly funded access to medical doctors and to facilities for carrying out the abortion. Otherwise, many women will resort to unsupervised abortions that are far more likely to jeopardize the health of the mother.

Which argument is, overall, more persuasive to you?

- A
- B

2	Death Penalty
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A. [Conservative] The death penalty is an appropriate punishment only if two conditions are met: first, the crime committed is particularly shocking and injurious to society (typically murder with specified “aggravating factors”); second, the judge or jury has to find that the defendant is guilty beyond any doubt (not just beyond a “reasonable doubt”). Under these specific circumstances, imposing the death penalty is both just and moral. Keeping a terrorist who murdered dozens of innocent men, women, and children alive equates the evil of mass murder with such acts as armed robbery, large-scale financial fraud, or other crimes that send defendants to prison for the rest of their lives. If the worst murderers are kept alive, not only can they continue to commit assault, battery, and even murder in prison, but they also get the opportunity to propagate their views and ideologies from prison. The families of murder victims must continue to live with the knowledge that the person who, for example, raped and murdered their seven-year-old daughter will always be taken care of in prison—enjoying meals with newly made friends, watching television, and working out. To think that each and every murderer must be kept alive is morally reprehensible.

B. [Liberal] Some crimes are truly horrific, but those committing them are every bit as human as the rest of us. Human beings can do terrible things to each other out of ignorance, but ignorance is a temporary condition that can be remedied by education, reflection, and insight, whereas being put to death is permanent. Many societies have already done away with capital punishment because even if we knew with certainty that the defendant committed the crime, having the state kill an unarmed prisoner sitting in a chair or lying in bed in a prison cell is to engage in behavior that is in some way equivalent to the horrific action the defendant committed in the first place. The death penalty is also never likely to be administered equally to the rich and poor, to all races, or to both sexes. Capital punishment not only takes the life of the defendant, but also devastates the lives of the defendant's parents, siblings, children, and friends, who are being punished severely though they are blameless. Spending the rest of your life in a small cell with no privacy or expectation of release is a suitable punishment for any serious crime—and even if it isn't, it is still better than involving the state in the killing of human beings.

Which argument is, overall, more persuasive to you?

- A
- B

3 Immigration

A. [Liberal] Our nation is and always has been a nation of immigrants. We have never had a policy of welcoming only doctors and scientists, businessmen and inventors. We have always welcomed also the poor, hard working men and women who reach us from neighboring lands in search of a better life. Many of these men and women do the jobs we ourselves no longer wish to do. Many send money to support relatives in their home countries, helping to spread prosperity well beyond our borders. Whether workers are documented or not, the vast majority are law-abiding, decent people. They must not live in fear of being deported, arrested, or taken advantage of. Though our history shows us that every generation of 'natives' has shown some resentment toward newcomers, we know that newcomers soon settle in, learn our ways, and make us a better, stronger nation, with a second generation that is fully integrated into society. We should embrace the men, women, and children who are here seeking a better life, treat them with dignity and respect, offer them easy access to all the services enjoyed by citizens, and allow them to settle as immigrants if they so wish.

B. [Conservative] Immigrants have contributed to our nation in numerous ways, which is why we should continue to attract and welcome qualified new immigrants. We should not, however, abandon our border controls and allow hordes of unscreened people to take root in our towns and cities. Illegal immigration creates countless problems on the local, state, and federal levels. Short-term effects include overloading our healthcare system, school system, and welfare system; long-term, we change the demographic and political fabric of our society and alter the very character and values of our nation. Our borders should first be made secure, bringing illegal immigration to a halt. Employers who employ illegal immigrants should be fined. Illegal immigrants who have committed felonies while here should be deported. Illegal immigrants who have been here for some years and have been law abiding throughout should be given a path to have their status changed eventually to that of legal immigrants. A temporary worker visa program can also be instituted to facilitate migrant labor, but open borders and hop-in-and-stay-forever immigration should never be accepted.

Which argument is, overall, more persuasive to you?

- A
- B

4 Guns

A. [Conservative] The right to protect one's life is the most fundamental of all rights. If your life or the life of your loved ones is ever under serious threat by an assailant, you will likely appreciate having

access to a firearm for self-protection. Even if you prefer not to own a firearm, what right do you have to force others not to own one? Will you tell an abused woman whose violent ex-husband is trying to gain entry to her house shouting “I will kill you” that she should just hold on to a kitchen knife and wait patiently for the police to show up? Denying a person the right to have effective means of self-defense is immoral and antithetical to the basic right to protect one’s life. By disallowing law-abiding citizens the right to own a gun, one allows, in effect, only criminals to possess guns, which is both foolish and dangerous. A well-trained, licensed, and responsible gun owner should also be permitted to carry his weapon on his person. This would not only allow him to defend himself in public in time of danger but also other innocents, for example in the case of mass shootings or terrorism. Certainly not everyone should be allowed to own a gun, not every firearm should be available for sale, and gun transactions should be registered; but, the basic right of people to protect themselves with a firearm against death or grave bodily harm should be respected.

B. [Liberal] It is much more common for a lawfully owned gun to be stolen or misused than it is to be used for protecting oneself from actual imminent harm. Guns and ammunition are so prevalent in our society that they are making all of us considerably less safe. Guns are responsible for countless deaths and injuries, including to children. A culture of guns is a big part of our culture of violence and crime. Only if we do our utmost to keep guns out of the hands of everyone (except the police) will our society be substantially less violent. Giving nearly every man and woman the ability to go into a store and come out with a weapon (after a quick background check) is a recipe for disaster. In fact, the proliferation of guns—which are by definition lethal and unsafe—has been an unmitigated disaster for society.

Which argument is, overall, more persuasive to you?

- A
- B

5 Taxation

A. [Liberal] Society can thrive only when all citizens are able to enjoy an adequate standard of living, especially those who are otherwise unable to do so on their own. People who can afford to should be asked to pay taxes at a level that ensures this in fact happens. A person who ends up being a high earner has benefited directly or indirectly from the contributions of all other members of society throughout his life, which is why no special sympathy or gratitude toward the wealthy is in order. In fact, many wealthy people can hire clever lawyers and accountants to minimize the taxes they need to pay, and many who are rich have accumulated their wealth in a less-than-ethical fashion. For there to be more social cohesion, for smaller gaps to exist between rich and poor, for more people to enjoy a greater quality of life, the upper middle class and the wealthy should be required to pay 50%, 60% or even more of their income in taxes. They will still be able to live very comfortable lives, but at least the playing field will be a little more level. Money can help solve most social problems; the upper middle class and the wealthy are in the best position to help solve those problems by giving more of their money in taxes. The bottom 50% of earners should not be asked to pay federal income tax—they are struggling as it is and are otherwise paying sales tax and numerous other taxes that are part of modern-day life.

B. [Conservative] Though tax revenue is necessary to enable a government to fulfill its vital functions, every citizen should fully recognize that taxes consist of the money earned by members of society through their great personal effort, sacrifice, and time investment. To prevent government from being wasteful with the people’s hard-earned money; to allow people to keep more of the money they earn so that they can freely choose how to spend, save, and invest it; and to encourage citizens to work hard and attain financial independence, a rate of taxation should always reflect these goals and come down on the lower side of the scale. A high rate of taxation creates a disincentive for people to take entrepreneurial risk and invest in the current economy. It also encourages people to cheat on their taxes and often results in a decreasing revenue stream for government. In a free democracy, citizens should be grateful to upper-income people because they are the ones whose large tax bills contribute

the bulk of tax revenue for the benefit of all. Upper-income people also buy luxury goods that are made by high-paying skilled artisans, they employ more people, and they make large charitable contributions. Having all those who are not in the upper income brackets vote to confiscate more and more money from those who are relatively well-to-do may be technically democratic, but is nonetheless unfair, contrary to the ideal of personal liberty, and leads to class warfare. A vastly simplified tax code should also be in effect to create a broader tax base and to enable greater tax compliance.

Which argument is, overall, more persuasive to you?

- A
- B

6 | Military

A. [Liberal] While maintaining armed forces is necessary for any democracy that faces enemies, military budgets are typically bloated and should be cut substantially, with funds saved best directed to social programs. A strong emphasis on the military as a vital institution in society is more likely to promote belligerence and war than to prevent them. While some wars are justified, unless it is clear the adversary is about to launch a war against us, nearly all pre-emptive strikes are immoral. We should also not keep various military bases around the world or use our military in other nations' conflicts all over the world (with the exception of preventing genocide). This puts our men and women at risk and wastes considerable money that is best used domestically. Military and militarism is something that a civilized society should reduce, not encourage. Therefore, the military has no business trying to recruit at civilian educational institutions—whether high schools or colleges.

B. [Conservative] The military in our free, democratic society is there to ensure that un-free, un-democratic societies are deterred from undermining our way of life and our freedoms. Our military should therefore receive ample funding to ensure its superiority against the military forces of our adversaries. While war should be the last resort once diplomacy fails, our enemies and their surrogates should always know we have the capacity to strike them anywhere in the world. To preserve our vital national interests, there are occasions when a pre-emptive military strike is appropriate, for example in thwarting a country from acquiring capabilities that would greatly endanger our security, or to prevent crimes against humanity committed against other nations. History shows that the militaries of free democracies have had a crucial role in liberating millions of people from oppression and tyranny. Being a vital institution in society, the military should be given access to promote ROTC programs and conduct on-college recruitment drives.

Which argument is, overall, more persuasive to you?

- A
- B

7 | Same-Sex Marriage

A. [Conservative] Gay people deserve our respect as equal human beings. They also deserve legal protections against unfair discrimination. Their desire to form strong, lasting relationships should be encouraged in the form of civil unions, with the ability to benefit from virtually all the rights enjoyed by married people. Society, however, has the right to acknowledge what has been maintained throughout history up until very recently in all societies and all traditions without exception: there is a value in maintaining marriage as a legal union only between man and woman. First, if society doesn't have the right to exclude same-sex unions from the definition of marriage, what legal basis is there to exclude multiple partner marriages or close relative marriages? Second, if society recognizes that marriage between gays and marriage between opposite-sex partners is completely identical, then how can we favor adoptions with opposite-sex couples over same-sex couples—even though experience and common sense tell us that a child gains something unique from a female role model (mother) and a male role model (father)? Third, if society recognizes that marriage between gays and marriage between opposite-sex partners is completely identical, then how can we say no to books depicting

same sex marriage when presented to very young children entering school? Fourth, the complete social acceptance of same-sex unions as equally valid will result in more young people experimenting with gay lifestyles, causing greater gender confusion and furthering social disintegration.

B. [Liberal] Any form of discrimination against gay people is immoral, including the prohibition against gay marriage. Civil unions were a step in the right direction, but gay people deserve no less than the full rights enjoyed by any other citizen—including the right to legal recognition of their same-sex union as a marriage. Children of gay couples are not deprived in any way, as two loving parents of the same sex can offer a child everything that opposite-sex parents can offer. Therefore, there is no reason to give adoption preference to opposite-sex parents over gay parents. All children in society, even young children, should grow up knowing not only that there are many gay people in the world, but also that they themselves may realize at some point that they are gay. Early exposure to this possibility creates an open atmosphere without fear or shame, and a loving acceptance of others and of oneself. Society can still prevent marriages of multiple partners or of close relatives if it so wishes, but while there are only a handful of people seeking multiple-party marriages or close-relative marriages who aren't allowed to, there are millions of gay couples who wish to be married and are denied this right.

Which argument is, overall, more persuasive to you?

- A
- B

8 | Labor Unions

A. [Conservative] Labor unions are not uniformly good or bad. Unions are sometimes good for their members but not necessarily for society as a whole. Teachers' unions are arguably good for their member teachers, but rarely do they have the children's best interest at heart. Big labor unions may be tougher negotiating partners with big business. But, when it's time for the employer to take steps to remain competitive in the modern global economy for the survival of the entire business (or to prevent the business from moving abroad), unions are notoriously inflexible, often to the long-term detriment of their own members. Public sector unions represent public servants, yet their benefits packages have mushroomed so much that the average public sector job now pays more than a private sector job when total benefits are considered. Because of union-friendly politicians and policies, employers now lack the ability to more easily hire and fire employees, which stifles economic growth in the rapidly changing business environment of the 21st century. With or without unions, great employees will nearly always be appreciated by any employer, and an employer who doesn't treat his employees well will find it hard to keep good workers. Private employee unions should remain legal, but their potential negative power should be recognized and limited by voters and policy makers.

B. [Liberal] Unions are beneficial for workers in industry and government and for society as a whole. Workers are the weakest negotiating partner unless they are unionized. Because businesses and government agencies have high-powered representation of their interests by executives and lawyers, employees need high-powered representation as well in the form of union leaders and labor lawyers. The stronger the union, the better matched it will be when dealing with management, which otherwise would only care about the bottom line and shareholder profits. Union salaries are higher than non-union salaries, which is good not only for union members but for their families and broader communities. Job stability allows for family stability, and workers who know they can't easily be fired go about their lives with less fear and a greater ability to plan for their future. Government union workers deserve generous benefit and pension packages because they do the work for all of us, and because highly competitive benefits packages can also attract more qualified workers to fill government jobs.

Which argument is, overall, more persuasive to you?

- A
- B

9 | Drugs

A. [Liberal] Though many drugs should remain illegal, some drugs including marijuana are already used so widely and responsibly that they should become legal. Marijuana use has fewer negative effects than alcohol use, with many people finding this recreational drug helping them cope with various problems and conditions. If adults want to use marijuana, they should have the liberty to do so without fear of legal prosecution, whether they get a slip from the doctor or not. When drugs are made illegal, the market for them is unregulated and untaxed, which puts users in greater danger and leaves government without needed revenue. Using police and courts to fight a drug problem that is defined to include drugs that are not truly problematic is to waste valuable public resources. Let adults do what they wish, and punish those selling drugs to kids just like we do now with alcohol.

B. [Conservative] From crime to addiction, damaged health to damaged relationships, drug use is a costly and debilitating problem widely prevalent in modern societies. If any drugs, including so-called “soft drugs” like marijuana, become as available and as legal as alcohol, this will undoubtedly result in many more people, including many teenagers, using drugs. The effect marijuana has on the body and mind of a teenager is far greater than it has on adults. In many cases, marijuana is a gateway drug to more serious drugs. Though medical marijuana should be legal and punishments for personal drug use should be reduced or eliminated under certain circumstances, making drugs including marijuana legal will only serve to make our society more addicted, more apathetic, and more fractured.

Which argument is, overall, more persuasive to you?

- A
- B

10 | Debt and Spending

A. [Conservative] Our nation is nearing economic collapse due to out-of-control increases in government spending. Our budgets are not balanced, our expenditures far outpace our revenue year after year, and the interest we pay on our debt is crippling our economy. Fiscal responsibility is lacking in our government, and politicians are all-too-eager to offer more entitlements to voters, not realizing that we are burying ourselves and our children under a mountain of debt. The size of government is growing every year, more and more areas of our economy are intruded upon by politicians, and fiscal responsibility is not in sight. There is waste, inefficiency, and fraud wherever government takes over areas better served by the private sector, with public programs promised to cost a certain amount ending up costing multiple times the initial estimate. Unless we run our public finances more like a responsible household or business, we will soon be experiencing financial meltdown.

B. [Liberal] Alarmist predictions about our nation’s financial health only serve to enable some politicians to cut back on social and environmental programs. The national debt would be much smaller if rich people were made to contribute more of their earnings to help support these vital programs. There is room for spending cuts, but not in programs that help those in need. Government should not be analogized to a business—spending on health, education, courts, the environment, etc. can’t be compared to the expenses of a private business. Much of our spending actually consists of investments in our country’s future and the well-being of our people, and when you invest you often have to borrow and carry a debt. When government increases its involvement in healthcare, education, job training, research, infrastructure, etc. all of us end up benefitting in the long-run, as does our economy.

Which argument is, overall, more persuasive to you?

- A
- B

11 | Race

A. [Liberal] The evils stemming from our nation’s long history of discrimination still plague us today. Though we have come a long way toward greater equality, there is much work to be done before

racism is eradicated. We know this because there are many lingering socio-economic differences between various ethnic and racial groups, with some groups faring much better than others. We also know that in the criminal justice system whites fare better than members of other races. We see as well that in many businesses minorities are not being promoted to management positions nearly in the percentage indicated by their presence in the general population. Even at top colleges and universities, we find that diversity is on the decline now that schools are doing away with affirmative action. Our nation has a great debt to pay for the many years of oppression against people of color, and until we see more equality of outcomes, it is not time to let our guard down against the insidious disease that is racism.

B. [Conservative] Certain racial groups have endured widespread legal and social discrimination up until a few decades ago. Since then, however, effective policies have been in place to remedy such discrimination, to great success. While no society is made up of individuals who are all entirely free of discriminatory or prejudiced views, a person who labels our current society as a “racist society” is clearly slandering it. The fact that, on average, not all ethnic and racial groups enjoy the same level of success and achievement is not due to any discriminatory laws, policies, or views held by other groups or the country as a whole. Rather, the breakdown of traditional social institutions, increases in out-of-wedlock births, the absence of responsible fathers in the home, and a subculture espousing a value system that distances such groups from a sensible course of social integration are all far more explanatory of disparate outcomes than any perceived discriminatory policies. Giving preferential treatment to members of groups whose ancestors were discriminated against long ago serves to discriminate against all those who are now competing for the same positions and are more qualified. A soft bigotry of low expectations is created when we lower standards for various minority groups, which also renders achievement by all members of such groups suspect. We should all focus on our shared humanity and our universal values, and otherwise be race-blind and color-blind.

Which argument is, overall, more persuasive to you?

- A
- B

12 Religion

A. [Liberal] Whatever religious character our nation had at its founding, in our modern pluralistic society there is no place for religion to intermingle with government. People can still be as religious as they’d like to be, so long as the setting in which their religious sentiment is expressed is not linked to the government in any way. Members of minority religions and atheists can feel uncomfortable if religious expression is exhibited in a public setting that suggests, even tangentially, governmental involvement. This includes, for example, placing a plaque of the Ten Commandments in any government building. There should be a strict wall of separation between religion and state, with secular government being a unifying value and religion being a personal value.

B. [Conservative] Most of our forefathers, including the founders of our nation, were religious people. Many of the values and virtues that inspired them were based on the contributions made by religion and scripture. While secular government, modernism, and science have also made vital contributions to our society, religion continues to play a vital and meaningful role in the lives of many people. This role should not be dismissed and suppressed so casually by the minority of people who opposes any role for religion in public life. So long as no one is forced to profess any faith or adhere to any sectarian practice, benign expressions of our nation’s religious heritage and the personal religious convictions of its citizens should be allowed through public means. Permitting a voluntary ‘moment of silence’ in school, allowing speakers to say “God Bless You” in a school graduation ceremony, making available some public facilities to be used for religious functions, funding and supporting religion-based programs that engage in non-discriminatory public service, and many other wholesome expressions of religious faith should be sanctioned and encouraged.

Which argument is, overall, more persuasive to you?

- A
- B

13 Free Speech

A. [Conservative] In recent decades free speech has been curtailed gradually through both legal means and through social pressure. Political correctness is a prime example of how we are all made to walk on eggshells verbally to avoid giving the slightest offense to any oversensitive group. Political correctness is the antithesis of genuine freedom of speech, by mandating that discussion and debate not center on what one believes to be true but on avoiding words that allegedly mask one's discriminatory intentions. University speech codes delineate between what is permissible discourse and what is impermissible discourse based on what college administrators deem sensitive or insensitive speech. Some mainstream speakers invited to speak on college campuses are met with disruptions and hostility from students and are often unable to complete their speeches. Workplace speech guidelines are so restrictive that men are afraid to compliment women for anything other than job performance lest they be viewed as harassing them. Hate speech laws prevent citizens from criticizing what they believe to be destructive elements in other people's world views, religious practices, and lifestyle choices.

B. [Liberal] Speech can sometimes be as harmful as action. We will never develop into a fully civilized, tolerant society if we have no boundaries between what is acceptable speech and what is speech that's designed to offend, marginalize, and discriminate. Setting the broad contours for proper discourse creates an environment in which minority groups and victim classes no longer feel threatened by inciteful language that actually tends to shut down discourse rather than promote it. Criticizing others with whom you disagree is one thing, but using language that undermines the dignity of another person serves only to perpetuate societal ignorance and legitimize divisive social policies. Workplace speech codes are there for a reason—to ensure, for example, that men do not create a hostile work environment for women by making comments about their physical appearance that are laced with innuendo, which could easily escalate into demeaning, abusive, and threatening speech.

Which argument is, overall, more persuasive to you?

- A
- B

14 Laws, Lawyers, and Judges

A. [Conservative] Our society is becoming ever more litigious, ever more bogged down by rules and laws and lawyers that do considerable harm, even if they have good intentions behind them. We should pass laws only to proscribe behavior that is truly harmful and not, as we do now, so casually. We ignore at our peril the fact that laws often have unintended consequences. We need to reduce the high level of litigiousness in society and the resulting debilitating fear of lawsuits experienced by individuals, groups, and companies. We need to stop legislation from the bench by judges who don't respect the difference between the legislative branch that makes law and the judicial branch that merely interprets it in specific cases. In a free society, some disagreements, differences, and inequalities will always remain among people. Many of those differences are best worked out through person-to-person contact, mediation, etc.—not through the judicial system. For all truly harmful behavior, let us not only have laws on the books but also enforce them more vigorously, but otherwise let us return to a simpler and freer society not dominated by laws, lawyers, and activist judges.

B. [Liberal] Modern life is increasingly and unavoidably complex. This requires our legislators to keep up with complex developments by passing laws designed to address the intricacies of many new challenges. Laws are also crucial in addressing inequalities and in offering more protections to citizens against increasingly powerful corporations and technologies. Laws promote health, safety, and well-being, and when an area of concern is unregulated, laws introduce order, certainty, and a means of

redress. Judges should use their legal expertise and good judgment to ensure justice is carried out in every case, without being limited by a need to adhere to a narrow reading of the law. We often vilify lawyers, but we forget how important it would be for us to obtain their services if the need came up for us to do so. And the only way many of us could afford to get justice is by utilizing their contingency fee arrangement whereby the attorney, in effect, takes the financial risk on our behalf. Restrictions on lawyers and judges, including mandatory sentencing guidelines, damage award caps, 'loser pay' provisions, etc. should all be rejected.

Which argument is, overall, more persuasive to you?

- A
- B

15 | Terrorism

A. [Conservative] Many nations on earth are facing a growing and substantial threat from militant Islam. Jihadist groups and their millions of sympathizers in the Muslim world are spread out in many countries, and are fully committed to harming "infidels." Groups such as Al-Qaeda and its many offshoots, theocratic governments like that of Iran, and Islamist-dominated regimes in parts of the Arab world pose a great danger to the free world. They seek in the long run to impose their repressive version of Islam on all societies. Muslim preachers in Western countries who preach a jihadist worldview should therefore be monitored, banned, or even expelled. Considerable anti-terror resources and extensive programs to protect us at home and abroad from the threat of Islamist terror will continue to be necessary for the foreseeable future.

B. [Liberal] Terror is one of the many problems facing the world today, and it isn't even among the most serious problems. Singling out Islamic terror and characterizing the danger as both a domestic and a global problem is unwarranted and even counter-productive. Al-Qaeda and similar groups represent a miniscule fraction of the Muslim world. They are clearly acting contrary to the spirit of Islam, and therefore the term "Islamic terror" should not even be used. Governments often tend to amplify such threats to serve their own purposes—to instill fear in citizens and to institute more police-state-like measures. In fact, a belligerent anti-terror policy not only sows fear at home but also creates more enemies abroad. Case in point are the heavy-handed anti-terror tactics which include killing some of those suspected of involvement in terror without even giving them due process of law (for example, through drone air strikes).

Which argument is, overall, more persuasive to you?

- A
- B

16 | Voter ID

A. [Liberal] A small percentage of our population—among them the very poor, new immigrants, and those with debilitating illnesses—find it difficult to obtain and maintain a government-issued photo ID. There is no reason, in the absence of clear proof of voter fraud, to force such people to obtain an ID in order to participate in the democratic process, which is every citizen's right. Because most of the people who don't have such IDs constitute a demographic that tends to vote for one political party over another, members of the opposite party prefer to place hurdles in their path, to reduce their likelihood of voting.

B. [Conservative] It should be mandatory for all voters to identify themselves using a government issued photo ID prior to casting their ballot at a polling place. This requirement should not be dependent on whether actual fraud is shown at various polling places, or whether voter fraud is prevalent or rare. It simply goes against logic to allow people who don't identify themselves to participate in our elections. Allowing non-verified individuals to vote serves to undermine our iron-clad faith in the integrity of our democratic process. Any citizen who wishes to fulfill his or her civic duty and influence our collective

future should make the minimal effort required to obtain a government issued ID. Many countries around the world already have this basic requirement because it is self-evidently important.

Which argument is, overall, more persuasive to you?

- A
- B

17 | Education

A. [Liberal] Our education system suffers from various problems, but chief among them is lack of funding. Several factors, including a substantial population increase, a need to use more expensive teaching tools than in the past, and a need to remain competitive with emerging economies that are producing students with higher math and science test scores, all mean that we should allocate more resources to our public education system. Diverting funds to non-public educational institutions will only weaken our existing system. To promote uniformity and to set a core curriculum program that standardizes learning, the federal government has to set guidelines and policies to ensure this in fact happens. Schools should not only reward personal academic achievement, but should also recognize the unique circumstances of every student and the student's potential for achievement. Many students can fall behind because of outside factors, but they must never lose their sense of pride, self-worth, and the belief that they can be anything they would like to be if they set their mind to it.

B. [Conservative] Despite the great increase in funding for public education over the last few decades, students' academic performance has not increased. In fact, because the source of our education problems has little to do with funding, we can make our education system much more effective even with smaller budgets. Parents should have the option of using their child's allotted government education funds as vouchers for the school the parents think is best for their child, rather than be stuck with the public school nearest to their home. Educators should enjoy greater autonomy from various federal, state, and local mandates—with the exception of accountability. Private companies should also be encouraged to enter the education market to bring in more innovation and competition. Schools should promote excellence and personal achievement—not give everyone a trophy under the guise of promoting student self-esteem. Good teachers should be rewarded more, poor teachers should be let go, and failing schools should be closed.

Which argument is, overall, more persuasive to you?

- A
- B

18 | Commerce

A. [Conservative] Trade within nations and between nations has always served to bring people closer together, to reduce conflict and even prevent war. Robust commerce creates wealth and increases the standard of living for all citizens. One of the primary roles of government is to help facilitate the free flow of goods and services so that citizens can unleash and maximize their ability to engage in commerce. Government should not create barriers to entry into commerce, and should regulate commerce to the extent necessary to prevent excessive harm, for example by preventing monopolies or the import and export of dangerous items. Duties and tariffs should also be kept to a minimum, allowing dynamic international trade where each country can offer goods and services as it sees fit, thereby creating a broader marketplace governed by the law of supply and demand. Individual entrepreneurs and corporate entrepreneurs are the creative spark that makes economic growth possible, with their willingness to take on greater economic risks, drive innovation forward, create jobs, and increase wealth for others.

B. [Liberal] Healthy commerce exists in a society in which every worker enjoys a living wage and where protecting workers' rights is front and center in the government's labor policy. A well-regulated marketplace ensures buyers are not taken advantage of, products are safe, and commercial advertising

is honest. A country should build up its manufacturing base and protect its local industries from foreign companies who have an unfair advantage. Economic policies should be aimed at creating the largest possible middle class, with relatively few who are either rich or poor. When the desire for profit is the main driving force behind commerce, the interests of ordinary people are poorly served. Therefore, public policy should ensure that the public good wins out against the natural human tendency for greed.

Which argument is, overall, more persuasive to you?

- A
- B

19 Crime

A. [Liberal] In any society where there is poverty, inequality, and lack of opportunity, one finds that crime is prevalent. Most criminals don't feel called to a life of crime, and most are not bad people. A difficult life can lead a person to make poor choices, including breaking the law. Once in prison, a petty criminal is exposed to more hardened criminals, and once out of prison facing the same lack of opportunity, the petty criminal is more likely to persist in a life of crime—sometimes more serious crime. While we must lock up dangerous criminals for extended periods, most criminals can be rehabilitated if we devote adequate resources to their rehabilitation. Creating more and more prisons is not the solution. Rather, we must invest more in our most underprivileged neighborhoods and in creating more job opportunities for young people. Wishing to lock up criminals and 'throw away the key' is not a public policy; it is an admission of society's failure.

B. [Conservative] Crime of all sorts has a pervasive debilitating effect on society. The few who are criminally minded make the lives of the many who are law-abiding much less pleasant and secure. Most criminals lack morals, are selfish, lazy, and predatory. Because criminals cost society countless billions of dollars each year, society should invest much more in the fight against crime. Crime should not pay, which means that punishments must be harsh enough to deter crime. Repeat criminals must be locked up for extended periods of time. If prisons get too crowded, we should build more of them. While attempts to rehabilitate criminals in prison are sometimes worthwhile, limited resources should largely be directed to our children, our elderly, and to others who have not chosen to embark on a life of crime. We ought to invest in prisoners by teaching them the importance of being productive—for example, by having them work for some of their prison benefits.

Which argument is, overall, more persuasive to you?

- A
- B

20 International Relations and the UN

A. [Liberal] Over the course of history humanity has been organizing itself into progressively larger group-units, first with extended families, then tribes, then states, then federations. The movement of history is clearly in the direction of more-encompassing units. It is with this understanding that we should view the roles played by the United Nations and other multi-national bodies such as the European Union. It seems quite inevitable and desirable that a 'one world government' would be established sometime this century or the next one to help all of us solve problems that are greater than any one nation can tackle—global warming, global terrorism, global epidemics, etc. International law is the glue that keeps all nation states operating under the same ground rules. The International Criminal Court, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and other such global bodies should be entrusted with keeping all nations in check to ensure each does not harm the common good.

B. [Conservative] International organizations like NATO and the OECD are examples of close cooperation between friendly nations who share similar values, even though those nations also have distinct differences. As important as the United Nations may be, it has a decidedly spotty record of promoting, peace, security, prosperity, and cooperation, largely because many of its member states do

not share common values. The UN does a better job of promoting the preservation of world historical sites than it does liberating people from tyranny and oppression. Countries who seek to stop great evil in the world should try to work through the UN framework, if possible, but until all influential member states become free democracies, the UN should not be regarded as having the final say on what is good and moral in global affairs. All free democracies, with the US at the helm, should seek in the meantime to promote the values of liberty and democracy all over the world.

Which argument is, overall, more persuasive to you?

- A
- B

21 | America and Israel

A. [Liberal] Both Israel and America are free democracies but also arrogant democracies, with past and present policies that have been callous toward the legitimate rights of other peoples and nations. Both have been belligerent at times toward their neighbors, and have even mistreated segments of their own populations. Instead of working more cooperatively with others, the US and Israel take too many unilateral steps. Israel is also very powerful and its adversaries much less so, which casts doubt on whether Israel can truly be called the victim in its conflict with its opponents. Though many of the actions of its opponents have been reprehensible, Israel is far from blameless. The US is too aligned with Israel and too willing to spread its own military technology around the world, thereby increasing global instability. If both countries were more diplomatic in their approaches, respecting the sovereignty of other nations and choosing to resolve disputes through the UN framework, there would be less animosity towards them and a greater chance of resolving disputes amicably.

B. [Conservative] Both America and Israel are beacons of democracy and liberty. Thanks to their innovative and entrepreneurial spirit, both nations have also made exceptional contributions to humanity in many fields including medicine, technology, and agriculture. Both are among the most pluralistic societies in the world and the most welcoming of immigrants. Israel and America's tenacity in protecting themselves from their enemies, who are undemocratic and anti-liberty, have garnered them some harsh critics. Israel especially must be judged in light of the actions of its enemies, who deny Israel's right to exist and deliberately use terror and mayhem against innocent Israeli men, women, and children. Israel has demonstrated with both Egypt and Jordan that it can be an excellent peace partner and can make far-reaching concessions, including territorial ones. But Israel does not make concessions to those who seek to destroy it—and nor should it. If Israel lay down its weapons, it would be run over and destroyed; if Israel's enemies lay down their own weapons, there would be peace and prosperity in the region.

Which argument is, overall, more persuasive to you?

- A
- B

22 | The Environment

A. [Liberal] Nothing is more important than the health of the natural environment—not just for human beings, but equally for the countless creatures that call planet Earth home. Humanity is straining the planet's ability to provide for us all, which necessitates we serve as better caretakers of the environment. We must wean ourselves from fossil fuels and publically support and finance individuals and companies that promote clean fuel technologies. We must drastically cut down on carbon emissions. We must transition to a largely pesticide-free method of cultivation. We must make people more aware of the great damage humanity is doing to our forests, oceans, and wetlands. We must stop encroaching on the natural habitats of many species, a trend that can be reversed by limiting our unchecked expansion and by mandating more thorough environmental impact studies prior to any development projects. All governments must come together and commit to taking the necessary steps to mitigate the devastating effects of global warming.

B. [Conservative] Increases in population and advancements in technology and industry mandate that humanity expand its footprint on the natural environment. Our goal shouldn't be to have the smallest footprint possible, but to strike a balance between our desire to protect the environment and our need to utilize natural resources for the benefit of our civilization. While more offshore and on-land oil drilling is necessary, we must utilize as well all other proven technologies to provide ourselves with abundant energy. While ensuring clean air, clean water, and clean land is a worthwhile goal, we cannot mandate extreme environmental measures that unduly restrict people's liberties—for example, banning all incandescent light bulbs and plastic bags, or giving the government control over our home thermostats and trash-sorting habits. Overly aggressive environmental policies lead to unforeseen and often highly detrimental results, like skyrocketing corn prices after environmentalists pushed for corn to be used as an alternative fuel. Environmental alarmists are responsible for propagating many false narratives, including that global warming will lead to an unmitigated global catastrophe unless we spend trillions of dollars to halt its progress. Those trillions of dollars are much better spent on more important policy priorities.

Which argument is, overall, more persuasive to you?

- A
- B

23 | Healthcare

A. [Conservative] Both government and the private sector have a role to play in ensuring citizens have access to affordable healthcare. The private sector can offer patients various options for health coverage from multiple insurance companies (even across state lines) as well as medical services ranging from competent to world-class, all based on free market principles including supply and demand. The private sector fosters competition and allows medical and pharmaceutical companies to invest their profits in medical research and new drugs and medical devices. Government can help ensure a robust market for health services by limiting unnecessary regulatory involvement, speeding new medication approval times, and limiting exorbitant lawsuit awards against healthcare providers. Government should also help pay for the medical care of the needy, and should offer loan forgiveness to medical students who sign up to work in underserved communities. Government should not, however, take over the healthcare industry by running it as a government program. Following such a takeover, most people will find that the quality of healthcare goes down, the cost of healthcare goes up (directly or through higher taxes), and health decisions best left for the patient and doctor are made by government bureaucrats. Most large-scale government programs are run inefficiently, over initial cost estimates, and with widespread fraud and abuse—the same will be true of government-run healthcare.

B. [Liberal] Access to affordable healthcare is important enough to qualify as a basic right of all citizens. If some people are deemed “uninsurable,” their lives and the well-being of their families could be put in jeopardy once they require medical care and are unable to pay for it. The private healthcare market is notoriously expensive, with greedy insurance companies, medical facilities, and drug companies overcharging at every opportunity. Only a government-mandated, government-run healthcare system can ensure all citizens receive adequate and affordable medical care. Only a government-run healthcare program can introduce large-scale cost-savings into the health system, including by eliminating the middleman that is the insurance company, by negotiating the best rates with large pharmaceutical companies, and by offering extensive preventive care services.

Which argument is, overall, more persuasive to you?

- A
- B

24 | Eminent Domain

A. [Conservative] The right to own and make use of one's property is among the most fundamental

rights enjoyed by all citizens. Government should therefore not have the right to force any citizen to sell his or her land if the citizen does not wish to do so. This right to refuse transfer of one's land should be absolute in the case of the government asking a citizen to sell his land to a private developer who claims his development project will benefit the broader community. This right to refuse is not absolute if the government needs to obtain the private land for its own public purposes (for instance, to build public infrastructure). However, this should only be allowed if the public purpose being served is deemed by a court of law to be vital, and if the land owner is compensated by the state at a rate that is considerably higher than "fair market value."

B. [Liberal] Government is not in the habit of confiscating (or buying) private people's land for no reason. When the rare opportunity presents itself and a big land development project requires congruous parcels of land, a person who is offered fair market value for his land should not be able to be a "holdout" and block the entire project from going forward. Such big development projects have the potential to revitalize entire neighborhoods and communities and can also create jobs for many local residents. In the case of government eminent domain, the courts have already ruled that government cannot take the land of a private citizen unless the use intended for the land is for the public good. There is no reason to require the government to pay the citizen considerably more than fair market value in such cases—after all, the money paid is public money.

Which argument is, overall, more persuasive to you?

- A
- B

25 | Torture

A. [Liberal] Torture is what barbaric people used to do quite regularly to those they considered enemies. In the 21st century, torture is not something that should be sanctioned under any circumstance. If we behave as our worst enemies do, we are no better than them. If we start a torture "program," we are liable to expand its use beyond rare cases—why not get lots of valuable intelligence by torturing lots of people? And how can we always be sure the person we claim has life-saving information actually has it? Even though we know that a person being tortured will likely admit to anything and therefore provide unreliable information, there are still those who advocate its use. Only a country that abhors torture and refrains from it is in a moral position to ask its enemies not to engage in it.

B. [Conservative] If war—with its potential for countless dead and wounded—is sometimes moral, then torture—with its potential for a few individuals suffering lasting psychological or physical wounds—must certainly be moral under certain circumstances. Torture is only moral when done for purposes of obtaining life-saving information from a suspected terrorist who is known to have such information, and when the terrorist does not cooperate with investigators, and when every minute is of the essence. So while rare, such circumstances do exist. Most people would agree that under these very narrow circumstances (for example, imagine your own loved one is facing imminent death at the hands of a ruthless terrorist who refuses to provide the life-saving information) applying enhanced physical and psychological pressure is not only a natural instinct but also the moral one. The leader of a nation should be given the authority in rare and specified circumstances to approve the use of such enhanced interrogation techniques when the safety and well-being of the population is under imminent threat.

Which argument is, overall, more persuasive to you?

- A
- B

26 | Bureaucracy and Regulations

A. [Liberal] While not all bureaucratic regulations are useful, most are. Regulations are necessary in order to apply broad policy choices to real life situations, resulting at times in lengthy and detailed

regulations. Regulations create order and predictability, and give people more confidence that the products, services, and institutions they are dealing with have met certain standards. The harm caused by an unregulated banking industry is just one example of how it is better to err on the side of more regulation rather than less. The damage done not only to people but also to the environment is substantial in the case of lax regulations for the oil industry, automobile industry, and many other industries that greatly affect our lives.

B. [Conservative] Government bureaucracy and its vast scope of regulations stifle people's ability to participate more freely and fully in the economic marketplace. Bureaucratic regulations also tend to encroach on people's other fundamental freedoms to conduct their lives in a way they deem best for themselves. Unless kept in check, governments tend to hire more and more bureaucrats to draft and enforce more regulations, growing the bureaucratic apparatus of the state to a point whereby it affects every aspect of a citizen's life. Under the guise of protecting the public, government regulations end up taking increasingly more responsibility away from adults in the belief that most adults are unable to use good judgment to manage their own affairs. From prohibiting the sale of soft drinks over a certain size and disallowing the use of certain common fats in restaurants, to requiring licenses, reports, and permits of more and more businesses and professions (including from children's lemonade stands), the vast increase in the number and types of regulations is slowly but surely eroding our freedoms and dampening our entrepreneurial spirit.

Which argument is, overall, more persuasive to you?

- A
- B

27 | Poverty

A. [Liberal] How we treat the poor in our midst determines the grade we deserve as human beings. Most poor people would much rather be self-sufficient than rely on aid from the government or anyone else. Most poor people would be happy to work in any job that pays a living wage. But there are countless life circumstances that prevent people from escaping the poverty cycle. A well-funded anti-poverty program should be the centerpiece of any administration's domestic agenda. Public housing projects can help create affordable housing for the poor to live in dignity. Substantial raises to the minimum wage, increased funding for the food stamp program, more government jobs that can help people move up the social and economic ladder—government has by far the largest role to play in alleviating poverty through these and other welfare measures. In fact, government should work not only to enable the poor to escape poverty but to raise their standard of living so as to keep up with what is presently considered the new necessities of life.

B. [Conservative] Poverty has been with us from time immemorial and will always be a fact of life for some people. Countless billions of dollars have been spent in the 'war on poverty,' but poverty rates have gone down only slightly over the past few decades. Those advocating increased government spending on poverty conveniently ignore non-economic predictors of poverty, for example a single-parent household is far more likely to be poor. We also need to accept the fact that some people who are below the poverty line freely choose their present lifestyle and could choose otherwise if they wanted to. Many others who are considered poor have supplemental, undeclared cash income, which, if known, would suggest they are not truly poor. When it comes to lifting people out of poverty, the best remedy is to foster economic prosperity, which should be the focus of any administration's anti-poverty program. Government should also target welfare aid not broadly to all the poor but specifically as a safety net for those who are poor and can't help themselves because of debilitating illness or injury. Private charities and other nonprofit groups have always played a vital role in addressing the needs of the poor—we must encourage their continued good work. Finally, we must learn to rely more on one another in times of need, as mutual aid goes a long way toward creating a better society. Each person should feel responsible to help his or her family members, friends, and other fellow citizens directly—not merely through government handouts that create a culture of dependency.

Which argument is, overall, more persuasive to you?

- A
- B

28 Campaign Finance

A. [Conservative] Anyone who wishes to support a political candidate should not be limited by the government in how much money they can legally contribute to their candidate of choice. So long as transparency is ensured by making public the contributor's name, there is no overriding reason to limit contributions to \$2,500 per candidate or, for that matter, \$10,000 or even \$50,000. A case can be made, perhaps, for limiting contributions to very high amounts (for example, \$250,000), so that candidates are not beholden to a few very wealthy contributors. But, in general, the rights of free people—in this case, to support a political candidate of their choosing as they see fit—should not be curtailed with an arbitrary determination that contributions over \$2,500 corrupt the political process. In fact, since candidates now spend many millions of dollars at every election, having a \$2,500 contribution limit has the unintended consequence of forcing politicians to spend a large portion of their time in office fundraising in the pursuit of countless small donations.

B. [Liberal] Even with existing limits on campaign contributions, there is too much money in politics. Allowing exorbitant contributions that the vast majority of ordinary citizens would never make should not be equated with allowing more “free speech.” Raising the limits will only result in more wealthy people, lobbyists, and corporations having an even greater influence on our elected officials and the policies they set. When politicians are forced to seek smaller amounts from more people, they are more likely to work for the benefit of the average voter. Ideally, all major political office campaigns should be financed entirely by public funding and not by private contributions.

Which argument is, overall, more persuasive to you?

- A
- B

29 Popular Culture

A. [Liberal] Popular culture is always part of the avant-garde. Pushing the envelope, breaking taboos, calling attention to undercurrents in society—popular culture has become freer to reflect important aspects of our collective psyche. Nowadays we have a great variety of expression in popular music, film, books, etc.—enough for different people to find what they like and tune out of what they don't like. Some people are too uptight about sexuality, and every public expression of it causes them anxiety and insecurity. The remedy for that is with the people themselves, not with popular culture. Creative people thrive best in a climate of openness and experimentation, in an environment where they are free to apply their social commentary, political ideology, and sense of aesthetics to their creations. People should be at liberty to be authentic and true to themselves—not act and speak one way in private and put on a façade in public. Humanity is messy, and our popular culture should reflect this reality.

B. [Conservative] Popular culture can, generally speaking, have either an uplifting effect on society, a largely neutral effect, or a degrading effect. In this day and age, popular culture has a decidedly degrading effect. By every measure—gratuitous violence in movies and video games; overt sexuality in magazine ads and MTV music videos; shallowness and stupidity on so-called reality TV shows; crude lyrics and melody-free music in popular music; and beauty-free works in art—our present popular culture has a debasing and corrosive effect on society and especially on our youth. Culture today is a pale shadow of the great cultural contributions of past decades and centuries. Even parents who try their best to shield their children from popular culture while at home are finding it difficult to cope with the onrush of unwholesome images on billboards, with schools that no longer require school uniforms or proper dress codes, with foul language spoken in public by both adults and children. This sad state of affairs has been brought about by the decline of religion in society, the decline of parental authority at

home, the decline of an education system that no longer teaches students classical virtues, and the rise of commercial entertainment interests appealing to the lowest common denominator.

Which argument is, overall, more persuasive to you?

- A
- B

30 | Moral Implications of Public Policy

A. [Conservative] Many politicians are completely insensitive to voters' moral and religious views on controversial public policy matters. Even though a large percentage of the population regards embryonic stem cell research as morally objectionable, some politicians cavalierly insist on publicly funding research into the possible health benefits of stem cells by studying embryonic stem cells and not merely adult stem cells. Another example of this callous disregard is when policy makers ask people who view most abortions as the immoral killing of a human embryo to pay for the abortions of other women. Free distribution of condoms in schools and keeping parents uninformed about their child's initiated interactions with health providers are two other examples of politicians ignoring the rights of people to have their religious and moral beliefs taken into account in public policy matters.

B. [Liberal] Public policy has to be based on rational considerations and be informed by the best scientific evidence relevant to the policy at hand. Moral considerations have a role to play in certain policy discussions, but narrow religious views should not dictate public policy or stand in the way of medical research and progress. The need to provide relief from suffering is too acute to be hampered by extraneous considerations. We cannot allow individuals to determine which public policy they wish to pay for and which to withhold funds from based on their private moral views. We cannot allow some parents to meddle in public school health programs based on personal grounds. Experienced educators and public health officials are well-equipped to safeguard the well-being of students in their care.

Which argument is, overall, more persuasive to you?

- A
- B

31 | Acculturation and Assimilation

A. [Liberal] Though our nation has much to be proud of, the dark chapters in our history should be taught just as thoroughly to allow students to learn from the mistakes of the past. Children of school age ought to learn objectively about the good and the bad in our history and reach their own conclusions over time. We also need to recognize that our nation is quite different from how it was centuries ago, as is the world around us. This means that our education system should be much more present- and future-oriented than past-oriented. It is not useful to speak broadly of our nation's historical or dominant values as it is to understand how race, color, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic background, sexual orientation, etc. help to form each person's unique worldview. We must fully embrace our pluralism and learn more about each other's perspectives. Requiring immigrants, especially disadvantaged ones, to learn our language and history while they are struggling to make ends meet is to place an unreasonable burden on them. We are also too quick to pass judgment on other cultures and their practices, imposing our sense of morality on everyone with whom we disagree.

B. [Conservative] Our heritage and values are not guaranteed to survive unless we take active steps to instill them in the next generation and in new immigrants. Our education system must emphasize the study of our history, our founding documents, and our dominant values. Doing so in the right spirit can help foster in children a sense of national pride and patriotism. Our national character will also be in jeopardy if we don't all speak a common language. Movements to have bilingual education and to offer ballots in foreign languages do more harm than good—immersion in the language of the country yields far better results for society. Recent trends in academia—ethnic studies, race studies, LGBT studies, etc.—tend to go too far in emphasizing what divides us over what unites us. Politicians who instigate

class warfare also work to divide us rather than unite us. Beyond showing interest in and respect for various aspects of other cultures, the trend toward multiculturalism blinds us to consequential differences among cultures and to the obvious superiority of some cultures over others.

Which argument is, overall, more persuasive to you?

- A
- B

32 Human Nature

A. [Conservative] Each one of us is born with both good and bad tendencies. As we mature, we develop these tendencies into virtues and vices of character according to the various influences we have in our childhood, the values we adopt over time, the decisions we make in life, and the wisdom we acquire with age. Our greatest battle in life should be not with anything outside of us but with our own negative nature—our laziness, lack of self-control, selfishness, greed, anger, etc. Much of our suffering is of our own making, if we are not careful to develop a good character and engage in good, responsible conduct. We must become more self-reliant and take responsibility for ourselves. We should certainly not view ourselves as victims. Those who support victimization narratives of certain groups and individuals make such groups and individuals feel justified in not improving their own condition. We must also acknowledge that while human nature is not fixed, there are distinct differences between various groups of people based on their value systems, temperament, etc. There are inherent psychological differences as well between men and women. Parents who get to raise both boys and girls quickly realize just how many differences there are between males and females which are not socially conditioned but are facts of life.

B. [Liberal] We are all born innocent, pure, and loving. Children of all ages possess considerable wisdom, even if they can't always express it. Much of our psychological makeup and character are already set by late childhood. Boys and girls have few (if any) inherent psychological differences between them. The more we are loved and accepted as children, the healthier we become as adults. The more struggle and pressure we experience as children, the more we adopt survivalist-type negative thinking as adults. Much of our suffering in life can be traced to factors beyond our control—a difficult childhood, lack of opportunity, lack of adequate medical care, etc. If we acknowledge each other's physical, emotional, and mental pain, our personal and collective lives will be greatly improved. Most problems that are attributed to 'bad' people and their 'bad' values can be traced to psychological, sociological, economic, and legal hurdles that stand in the way of a person's ability to live up to his or her true potential. With compassionate social policies in place, it will take only a few generations before our society could be called a utopia.

Which argument is, overall, more persuasive to you?

- A
- B