

BATTLE FOR THE SIXIES

During an election year, it is crucial to all parties to be backed by the American people. The real question is, who do you vote for? Are you a Republican, Democrat, third party supporter, Communist, or are you the kind of person where party name has no persuasion on you? It may be all about the candidate.

In a recent poll, 57% of all people agreed that party name does have influence on their decision of who they would vote for, while the other 49% said that it depends on the person and their party's platform.

But how do you choose? Maybe the answer is to support the candidate who has the best interest in your gender. Consider the facts about the candidates.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in the 2000 Presidential Election, 61 percent of all eligible women voters cast a ballot. The participation of men was 3 percent lower. Statistics illustrate that women are a target group for presidential candidates.

The results of previous elections show that democratic candidates have firmly held the majority of women's votes since 1980. However, polls show that the "gender gap" has slowly started to contract this election year.

A recent poll conducted by Lifetime, a television channel for women, reveals that equal pay for men and women in the workplace is a major issue for women in this election.

Antioch Community High School senior, Erum Qureshi, said, "I'd definitely vote for Kerry if I could. I support the fact that the tax-cuts are going to be given to the middle-class, rather than those who earn a yearly income of \$200,000 or more. He seems like a person who might present equality to our country...we need a president who can increase employment. We are in desperate need of that if we want to eliminate the poverty in our country."

In the second presidential debate, Kerry outlined his plan for increasing employment. Kerry plans to minimize the effects of outsourcing by discouraging American companies of this method.

"There is a tax loophole right now. If you're a company in St. Louis working, trying to make jobs here (in St. Louis), there is actually an incentive for you to go away. You get more money; you keep more of your taxes by going abroad. I'm going to shut that loophole, and I'm going to give the tax benefit to the companies that stay here in America to help make them more competitive," said Kerry.

According to Dolores Huerta, the national chair of the Women for Kerry campaign, women want to know more about issues such as health care and social security. Recent polls have proved her to be true.

Many female students at ACHS think that women's issues weren't addressed properly in any of the presidential debates.

"I don't remember any of the women's issues being mentioned, except abortion, but that just didn't seem enough," said ACHS junior, Rena Kasper.

Although Kerry doesn't morally approve of abortion, he supports the right to allow women a choice. He believes that this choice involves a woman, God, and her doctor.

"I believe that I can't legislate or transfer to another American citizen my article of faith. What is an article of faith for me is not something that I can legislate on somebody who doesn't share that article of faith," said Kerry in the third presidential debate.

On Oct. 7 Kerry made a guest appearance on "Live with Regis and Kelly," a morning talk show hosted by Regis Philbin and Kelly Ripa. Kerry emphasized how he would improve the current situation with the War on Iraq.

According to Kelsie Morway, ACHS junior, and many other US citizens across the nation, this Presidential debate was one of the dirtiest yet.

"They're more caught up in fighting with each other. It's like they're in an emotional battle, rather than an actual debate," said Morway.

As the date of the 2004 Presidential Election nears, Senator Kerry aims to present America's women with a more clear view of his beliefs on the issues that concern them the most.

Although Kerry is often thought of as a women's candidate, many men are supporting him as well.

Kerry's stance includes rolling back the tax break that Bush gave to upper income earners, raising the minimum wage, and making Social Security a public program. Kerry thinks that Bush rushed into war in Iraq with no exit strategy. Kerry states that he will work to get more alliances with other countries so America can regain its respect. Kerry also claims that he will bridge the gap between what men earn and what women earn and he will not raise taxes for the normal, middle-class family.

Kerry's platform is the major reason why the male population at ACHS will be in favor of him come election day.

"Kerry's plan for war is much better than Bush's. Bush doesn't have the best interests for everyone," said ACHS senior Rob Black. "Bush went to war in Iraq to solve personal problems more than anything else. Bush does not seem to handle conflicts as well as Kerry does."

Jordan Taylor, ACHS senior, also will be siding with Kerry because he is not happy with how Bush has served the United States.

"I don't believe that Bush did his job. We have millions of people who lost their jobs, an unnecessary war taking place, higher gas prices, and tax cuts for people who are rich. It is time for a change," Taylor said. "I believe that the war in Iraq is unnecessary and it's obvious the people don't want us there."

Although ACHS junior Chase Behrendt, along with most ACHS students, will not be old enough to vote on November 2, the feeling is still strong that Kerry would fill the President's position better.

"Kerry would be better for the economy and he would help me by not taxing me as much," said Behrendt. "I think he will be able to restore us as a world power and not a big bully."

Whether it be war strategies or taxes, Kerry has many changes in mind for the United States that appeal to the American male. We will have to wait until the beginning of November to see if these ideals will prevail.

The Bush Campaign is working hard for the women's vote. With the election so close, women may tip the balance toward George W. Bush.

During President Bush's first term he had passed a number of measures that were targeted towards women. During his current campaign he has proposed more legislation that will provide added help for women and families.

"No Child Left Behind" was intended to set minimum standards for all schools and students. The goal was to make sure the children in the poor and low-income neighborhoods get the same basic education given to the more affluent student. Many single moms are the head of the household in these depressed areas.

"The tax relief plan of 2001" provided families with an increase in the children's exemptions. It also reduced the marriage tax penalty. This provided each household with immediate dollars.

"The Health Savings Accounts" allows working families to pay for non-covered medical expenses with pre-tax dollars. This benefit applies to all families.

Bush has proposed a new health initiative by creating Association Health Plans (AHP's), individuals and small businesses would be able to negotiate low health insurance premiums. By pooling the buying power, many uninsured single mothers would have more choice of reduced premiums.

Bush also has proposed adding 1,200 community health centers to serve up to an additional 6 million people. Community health centers would provide basic care to uninsured and the poor. Many children and single mothers depend on this care.

Bush passed a prescription choice plan for seniors; for the first time Medicare would have some benefits to help pay for the growing expenses seniors face. Bush proposed changes to Medicare to allow seniors more choice on how their Medicare benefits would be handled.

"Job Creation" will be one of the centerpieces of Bush's second term if he is elected. With changes in tax rates on dividend and capital gains and expanded deductions on equipment purchases for small businesses, many new jobs will be created. This would benefit college graduates and many single moms.

As one of the closest elections in history is just weeks away, and is showing a stronger youth interest than in past presidential elections, students can't help but take a side. Not only has this election had such a strong American interest, but it has also caught the world's attention. Statistically, over the years most women have cast their vote democratic and most men have voted republican. In this election most men will vote for George Bush for many reasons. In general, sportsmen back Bush because of his view on gun control and his southern hobbies. Antioch Community High School senior Tom Kraenzle says simply, "I back Bush because, like most kids my age in Antioch, I enjoy the outdoors." Other men simply like Bush because he takes more of a "macho" stand than John Kerry. After September 11, Bush was quoted saying, "I want Osama Bin Laden dead or alive." In response to Saddam's holdouts in Iraq, he said, "Bring 'em on" meaning that our troops are ready for the terrorists. Men seem to appreciate and relate to Bush's old west ways. The American people have learned to like strong statements from the President such as his response to hiding terrorists during a State of the Union Address in 2002. "They've got a problem on their hands," Bush said of the terrorists. "We're gonna find 'em. And if they're hidin', we're gonna smoke 'em out. And we'll bring 'em to justice." Words like these bring more patriotism into every American's heart. Even though it seems most people oppose the war in Iraq, in a recent poll by U.S. military personnel of more than 4,000 troops, 73% said they would vote for Bush if the election were held today. This is a strong percentage of the polled troops showing how, traditionally, the military votes republican.

Men also stand behind President Bush because of some of the things he has done in his term as president. One of his most accomplished feats is the Patriot Act, which simply enhances domestic security against terrorism and gives more power to law enforcement personnel seeking out these terrorists. It also helped to strengthen our nation's borders. Another reason men our age seem to support Bush for reelection is because his second phase of the No Child Left Behind Act which will make sure high school students are better prepared for their higher education. But we can't look at just our present state; we also need to focus on our future and where we will be and what we will be doing in ten years. President Bush will provide assistance to help America meet his new goal of creating seven million new, affordable homes in ten years. This is just about the time we will be looking to find a home and settle down.

On November 2 you need to remember that you vote as an individual and your vote does count. If you don't vote and you have the ability to, you are not using your rights as a citizen of the United States of America, and you don't have the right to complain on January 6!

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