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The Texas Orator Town Hall

BY [AUDREY ISAAK](#) on [NOVEMBER 12, 2018](#) • [\(0 \)](#)

On Oct. 9, 2018, *The Texas Orator* hosted a town hall with Libertarian U.S. Senate candidate Neal Dikeman and Libertarian gubernatorial candidate Mark Tippetts. The discussion that ensued covered a wide range of subjects, from divisive issues like health care policy to the bipartisan topics like gerrymandering. However, one message lying at the heart of libertarianism persisted throughout the night: individual freedom. Libertarianism is based on the philosophy that each individual should be able to do what they wish as long as they are not hurting someone else or imposing upon others’ rights. Practically, this means lowering taxes and delegating more power to local governments and private institutions. Less money would be lost to the complex systems of bureaucratic management, and it would give citizens more direct control over how and where their money is being spent. In theory, this leads to a more efficient society governed by the principles of the free market.

The Party also endorsed the autonomy of government free from the will of big business and of business from government. For example, Dikeman and Tippetts criticized the government’s interference in health care by citing tax deductions for employer-paid health insurance that resulted in an oligopoly of health insurance providers and soaring health care costs.

But perhaps the most important point of the evening was the individuality that third parties such as the Libertarian Party offer us in our own thought. The two-party system has taught us to think in binary, but instead of zeros and ones, we think in terms of Democrat and Republican. This is exacerbated by liberal and conservative media sources that often take extreme positions and ignore all nuance in order to create an enticing but dangerous picture of a black and white world. They seek only to boost their network ratings with the simplicity that human beings are so often drawn to. Third parties add a different dimension to the conversation and force us to be more introspective about our own beliefs rather than relying on a particular party platform, allowing a compromise between the good points on both sides.

People tend to treat voting as though they are betting on a race horse. Rather than taking the time to evaluate each candidate thoroughly and seeing which candidate’s views actually align with their own, they just want to pick the winner. Dikeman and Tippetts asserted that most Texans’ views are probably more in line with libertarianism than previously thought, as evidenced by the fact “Ted Cruz called himself a libertarian”(Dikeman) during the first Senate debate. However, Libertarians seldom win elections due to lack of campaign funding and the fact that most people don’t want to back a losing horse. Thus, this “horse race” mentality works in a cyclical manner to increase political polarization.

The town hall gave students the opportunity to look at politics from a different perspective and to communicate with politicians their own concerns about issues affecting their everyday lives. It opened the floor for discussion rather than argumentation that we may get closer to real solutions across party lines.



Academic – ish.

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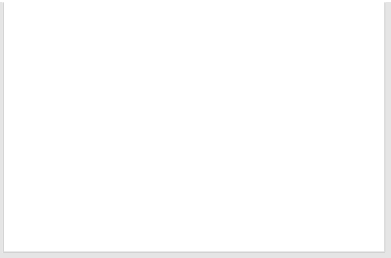


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