

2020

DIVISION

Sparked from the controversy of the 2016 presidential election, opposing goals for the United States has divided members within the Democratic Party, changing the course of politics in the 2020 presidential election.

As radical and moderate democrats presidential candidates compete for the 2020 presidential nomination, ideological division between members of the Democratic Party have led to the question of a radical versus moderate candidacy moving forward.

With the establishment of United States political parties in the late 1770s', tensions between citizens with differing political viewpoints has always been a significant factor in U.S. government legislation, discussions and elections.

However, following the 2016 presidential election, increasingly different ideas for the future of the

U.S. has contributed to a wider division within the Democratic party. According to GALLUP, a management consulting company poll, 77% of the nation believed there is political division in the United States in 2016.

During the 2020 presidential race, many of the Democratic presidential candidates present differing platforms ranging between radical and moderate. More specifically, in regards to the recent Super Tuesday primary on March 3, Democratic presidential nominees front runners Joe Biden and Bernie Sanders, which Athens, Georgia, Cedar Shoals High School sophomore Michael Niedzwiecki Castile

believes has created a defined division in the Democratic party.

"It's almost as if a rift is opening in the Democratic Party itself," Cedar Shoals High School sophomore Michael Niedzwiecki Castile said. "Right now, Bernie supporters and Biden supporters are at each other's throats trying to convince the other that they will win, they will be (President Donald Trump). It's less, at this point, about beating Trump as beating the other people in your own party, which is creating a big problem.

Niedzwiecki Castile believes surrounding oneself in a group that confirms one's beliefs can be detrimental to one's larger under-

standing of a topic.

"If you continue talking to only people with your own viewpoint, it gets more and more extreme on both a liberal and conservative side," Niedzwiecki Castile said. "I think by doing that, I lose my ability to empathize or at least respect other people and other people's viewpoints."

In order to combat this bias, Niedzwiecki Castile seeks a broader set of viewpoints within his social circles.

"Most of my friend group is pretty liberal or at least moderate like me," Niedzwiecki Castile said. "But, I make an effort to at least have a decent (number) of friends who don't share the same viewpoints

as me. It makes me a better, more well-rounded person."

Similarly, University of South Carolina political science major Graham Sclater understands the issue as a matter of empathy.

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**- MICHAEL NIEDZWIECKI CASTILE,
CEDAR SHOALS HIGH SCHOOL SOPHOMORE**

"I think awareness is the thing that combats people's super radical far-left (or) far-right tendencies," Sclater said. "If you are aware of the issue and you understand there's a human behind that issue and they're coming from some-

place, you're much better able to empathize with them, even if you don't agree with them."

Community member Piper Jefferson* believes a way to mend ideological divisions within political parties in the future is to promote difficult conversations relevant to the 2020 election.

"In this last election young people are really kind of (pressured) to get out and vote and voice their opinions and have those difficult conversations," Jefferson said. "We don't grow if we keep our ideas bottled up to ourselves. I think going out and making sure you're informed about what's going on in your community and voting is the biggest thing you can do."

