

## American Politics; Factions, Distractions, Deceptions &amp; Rhetoric

Renowned social reformer and abolitionist Frederick Douglass argued in his speech delivered in Glasgow, Scotland, in 1860, that the U.S. Constitution, a document in which our country flourishes under, was not solely created to dictate the laws of the people that it presides over. Douglass instead optimistically insisted that the U.S. Constitution itself, as a document, is the backbone of all judgments to be made that concern the American people, and a document which encourages the purest form of liberal democracy and freedom through leaving the power into the interpretation of the reader. This, per say, might have been the idea that struck fear into the heart of our nation's first president, George Washington, who feared that the formation of factions due to these interpretations among our nation would distract and impede justice in our society, taking our focus away from what needs to be done and instead honing in on how to strike against those who disagree with us. However, if the constitution itself and how it is interpreted is up to the perspectives of the American people themselves, then Washington's fears of dissociation of groups of people in America due to differing political beliefs was inevitable to come true. The truth is, our nation has already had these factions formed for hundreds of years. Factions, which sprout as smaller, dissenting groups of a larger one in politics, form due to the clashing opinions of citizens on topics such as basic human rights and what the government can or can not dictate about every man's pursuit in life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Although these factions are inevitable in the growth of our society and in leaving rights to the American people, they do not cease to distract the American citizen from what is truly important in their role in modern politics and the decisions being made pertaining to their country, and their home. These factions (A.K.A., political parties), have shoved our country into a downward spiral of hard-headedness and mud-slinging, where we have forgotten about why we wish to fight so hard to protect our liberal democracy, and instead our minds are flooded with how to best strike against our neighbors who disagree with us. We have abused the opportunity in which our freedom of speech that we are entitled to has given us in the decision making in our country, because we have forgotten how to speak with an open mind. So, in other words, we as Americans, have a problem. Our problem is not with the issues in which we are so quick to double-cross and fight with each other over; our problem is with the focus in which our passion, which should be put towards the good of our nation, lies. In other words, these political parties that form in order to voice the opinion of each and every citizen, have confirmed that Washington's fears were rational when he insisted on denying the formation of political parties in which he believed would revolt against one another and take away from the greater good. Long story short: in search of voiced opinions for all, America has become distracted. Distracted from focusing on what they can control, through voicing their opinions in the ballot that they cast for their state representatives, and instead obsessing over who they will vote for to become a part of the rhetorical presidency in which our nation's media obsesses over. America has become more focused on being blue or red, an elephant or a donkey, (both of which have shown they cannot impeccably run a country), than simply being an American, proud of the land that they love and

that so many sacrifice for. It has become increasingly easy for the American people to distract themselves with over the years through mass media outlets constantly pumping out information and interviews that they deem as “factual”, entertaining Americans everywhere through eluding them into the thought that they, as a part of a political party, are directly influencing change; when in reality, they are sitting on their couch at home, blind to the yellow journalism and sensationalism that makes the “I VOTED” sticker on their shirt essentially meaningless. Instead of focusing on researching and investigating the issues our country is facing while keeping an open mind, we feel more inclined to be encouraged and convinced of what our opinions should be based on the words of corrupt politicians in their deceptively crisp business attire on the cover of a well known news station. The bottom line is, that the American people have become content with mediocrity when it comes to the knowledge in which we base our political opinions off of. It is not simply what do you believe, why do you believe it, and why should the opposing view acknowledge it; our political views have become so much more coated in lies and rhetoric in which we can’t even begin to comprehend because all we do is read the CNN or FOX NEWS headlines and then a switch flips off in our brains, pushing us to the right or left side of the tightrope which is American politics. The danger in entrusting our protection and the conditions in which we live in our free country into the hands of one person that is but a small part of the executive branch, is that, we forget to hold that person accountable. Rhetorical presidency is an example of something Americans have become blind to since the mass upbringing of media outlets that cast shadows over the gloomy aspects of our nation, and highlights the pretty ones. We’re more concerned with what the president has tweeted than with the equal balance of power between our three branches of government in which not even all Americans understand, or desire to. Half of the nation would not even understand the notion of a filibuster, even when there have been countless attempts to stop legislation through the senate in participating in one. “We the People”, is a statement that’s validity has been lost in recent times, when the people themselves can’t even stand to educate themselves on their government and how their voice can affect their lives and those around them, and when they do, they still fail to come to a consensus in which everyone gets on board with a singular idea. All of this to say, America is distracted. We as the American people have forgotten the importance of not only our vote, but a vindicated vote in which we truly believe in, and what it is truly like to be an American first, before a liberal or conservative. Although we have come very far from the times of our forefathers, we are more like them than we’d like to admit. We might not see in all black and white, as we reminisce that they once did, but now all that we see in is red or blue. Not the colors red and blue that alongside white represents the beauty of our free country and honors those that fight for it, but the red and blue that covers up the sanctity of being able to hold an opinion but not being defined by it. We. Are. Distracted. And if we can’t even acknowledge the log in our own eyes as we call out the twig blocking the clear vision of others, we are destined for the very madness caused by our pride that Washington feared.

Sydney Lockridge

[ssl00007@cameronschools.org](mailto:ssl00007@cameronschools.org) or 816-284-4685

Cameron High School, Cameron, MO

16 years old

Entering junior year