TAKING SIDES

Clashing Views on Controversial Political Issues

Tenth Edition

George McKenna
Stanley Feingold

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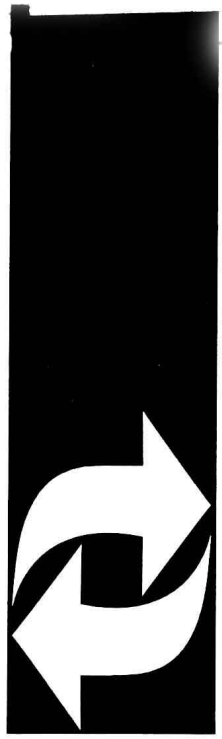

Tenth Edition

Edited, Selected, and with Introductions by

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and
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In memory of Hillman M. Bishop and Samuel Hendel, masters of an art often neglected by college teachers: teaching.

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PREFACE

Dialogue means two people talking to the same issue. This is not as easy as it sounds. Play back the next serious conversation you hear between zealots on opposing sides of a controversial issue; listen to them try to persuade one another of the truth, logic, and virtue of their own views and the falsity, irrationality, and downright evil of the others'.

What is likely to go wrong? At the outset, they are unlikely to make clear the nature of the issue, defining or describing it with enough clarity and specificity to make sure that they are both talking about the same area of controversy. As they proceed, they are likely to employ vague, emotion-laden terms without spelling out the uses to which the terms are put. When the heat is on, they may resort to shouting epithets at one another, and the hoped-for meeting of minds will give way to the scoring of political points and the reinforcement of existing prejudices. When, for example, the discussion of affirmative action comes down to both sides accusing the other of "racism," or when the controversy over abortion degenerates into taunts and name-calling, then no one really listens and learns from the other side.

It is our conviction that people *can* learn from the other side, no matter how sharply opposed it is to their own cherished viewpoint. Sometimes, after listening to others, we change our view entirely. But in most cases, we either incorporate some elements of the opposing view—thus making our own richer—or else learn how to answer the objections to our viewpoint. Either way, we gain from the experience. For these reasons we believe that encouraging dialogue between opposed positions is the most certain way of enhancing public understanding.

The purpose of this tenth edition of *Taking Sides* is to continue to work toward the revival of political dialogue in America. As we have done in the past nine editions, we examine leading issues in American politics from the perspective of sharply opposed points of view. We have tried to select authors who argue their points vigorously but in such a way as to enhance our understanding of the issue.

We hope that the reader who confronts lively and thoughtful statements on vital issues will be stimulated to ask some of the critical questions about American politics. What are the highest-priority issues with which government must deal today? What positions should be taken on these issues? What should be the attitude of Americans toward their government? Our conviction is that a healthy, stable democracy requires a citizenry that considers these questions and participates, however indirectly, in answering them. The alternative is apathy, passivity, and, sooner or later, the rule of tyrants.

Plan of the book Each issue has an issue *introduction*, which sets the stage for the debate as it is argued in the YES and NO selections. Each issue concludes with a *postscript* that makes some final observations and points the way to other questions related to the issue. In reading the issue and forming your own opinions you should not feel confined to adopt one or the other of the positions presented. There are positions in between the given views or totally outside them, and the *suggestions for further reading* that appear in each issue postscript should help you find resources to continue your study of the subject. We have also provided Internet site addresses (URLs) in some postscripts as starting points for further research. At the back of the book is a listing of all the *contributors to this volume*, which will give you information on the political scientists and commentators whose views are debated here.

Changes to this edition Over the past 18 years *Taking Sides* has undergone extensive changes and improvements, and we are particularly proud of this milestone tenth edition. There are seven new issues in this volume: *Has the American Political System Succeeded?* (Issue 1); *Is the Level of Political Discussion in the Media Deteriorating?* (Issue 4); *Has the Welfare State Failed America's Poor?* (Issue 14); *Is a Flat Tax a Fair Tax?* (Issue 15); *Do We Need a Constitutional Amendment Permitting Prayer in Public Schools?* (Issue 17); *Should Gay Marriage Be Legalized?* (Issue 18); and *Should American Foreign Policy Be Guided by National Self-Interest?* (Issue 20). On six other issues (term limits, the presidency, affirmative action, "hate speech," abortion, and America as world leader) we have changed one or both of the selections within the issues. All told, there are 23 new selections.

We worked hard on what we hope will be a truly memorable tenth edition, and we think you will like the result. Let us know what you think by writing to us care of Dushkin Publishing Group/Brown & Benchmark Publishers, Sluice Dock, Guilford, CT 06437 or emailing us at `GMcK1320@aol.com`. Suggestions for further improvements are most welcome!

A word to the instructor An *Instructor's Manual With Test Questions* (multiple-choice and essay) is available through the publisher. A general guidebook, called *Using Taking Sides in the Classroom*, which discusses methods and techniques for integrating the pro/con approach into any classroom setting, is also available.

Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Political Issues is only one title in the Taking Sides series; the others are listed on the back cover. If you are interested in seeing the table of contents for any of the other titles, please visit the Taking Sides Web site at `http://www.dushkin.com/takingsides/`.

Acknowledgments We received many helpful comments and suggestions from our friends and readers across the United States and Canada. Their suggestions have markedly enhanced the quality of this edition of *Taking Sides* and are reflected in the totally new issues and the updated selections.

Our thanks go to those who responded with suggestions for the tenth edition:

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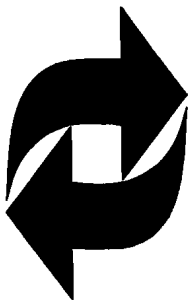

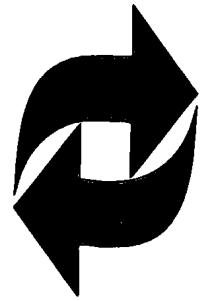

INTRODUCTION

Labels and Alignments in American Politics

George McKenna
Stanley Feingold

Liberalism, conservatism, radicalism, pluralism, left wing, right wing, moderate, extremist, radical—do these terms have any meaning? Or are they just descriptive words that are used to rally the faithful and batter the enemy? Are they, as Shakespeare would have said, full of sound and fury but signifying nothing, or do they contain some specific core meanings? We think that they do have intelligible meanings; however, they must be used thoughtfully. Otherwise, the terms may end up obscuring or oversimplifying positions. Our purpose in this Introduction is to explore the basic core meanings of these terms in order to make them useful to us as citizens.

LIBERALS VERSUS CONSERVATIVES: AN OVERVIEW

Let us examine, very briefly, the historical evolution of the terms *liberalism* and *conservatism.* By examining the roots of these terms, we can see how these philosophies have adapted themselves to changing times. In that way, we can avoid using the terms rigidly, without reference to the particular contexts in which liberalism and conservatism have operated over the past two centuries.

Classical Liberalism

The classical root of the term liberalism is the Latin word *libertas,* meaning "liberty" or "freedom." In the early nineteenth century, liberals dedicated themselves to freeing individuals from all unnecessary and oppressive obligations to authority—whether the authority came from the church or the state. They opposed the licensing and censorship of the press, the punishment of heresy, the establishment of religion, and any attempt to dictate orthodoxy in matters of opinion. In economics, liberals opposed state monopolies and other constraints upon competition between private businesses. At this point in its development, liberalism defined freedom primarily in terms of freedom *from.* It appropriated the French term *laissez-faire,* which literally means "leave to be." Leave people alone! That was the spirit of liberalism in its early days. It wanted government to stay out of people's lives and to play a modest role in general. Thomas Jefferson summed up this concept when he said, "I am no friend of energetic government. It is always oppressive."

Despite their suspicion of government, classical liberals invested high hopes in the political process. By and large, they were great believers in

democracy. They believed in widening suffrage to include every white male, and some of them were prepared to enfranchise women and blacks as well. Although liberals occasionally worried about "the tyranny of the majority," they were more prepared to trust the masses than to trust a permanent, entrenched elite. Liberal social policy was dedicated to fulfilling human potential and was based on the assumption that this often-hidden potential is enormous. Human beings, liberals argued, were basically good and reasonable. Evil and irrationality were believed to be caused by "outside" influences; they were the result of a bad social environment. A liberal commonwealth, therefore, was one that would remove the hindrances to the full flowering of the human personality.

The basic vision of liberalism has not changed since the nineteenth century. What has changed is the way it is applied to modern society. In that respect, liberalism has changed dramatically. Today, instead of regarding government with suspicion, liberals welcome government as an instrument to serve the people. The change in philosophy began in the latter years of the nineteenth century, when businesses—once small, independent operations—began to grow into giant structures that overwhelmed individuals and sometimes even overshadowed the state in power and wealth. At that time, liberals began reconsidering their commitment to the *laissez-faire* philosophy. If the state can be an oppressor, asked liberals, can't big business also oppress people? By then, many were convinced that commercial and industrial monopolies were crushing the souls and bodies of the working classes. The state, formerly the villain, now was viewed by liberals as a potential savior. The concept of freedom was transformed into something more than a negative freedom *from;* the term began to take on a positive meaning. It meant "realizing one's full potential." Toward this end, liberals believed, the state could prove to be a valuable instrument. It could educate children, protect the health and safety of workers, help people through hard times, promote a healthy economy, and—when necessary—force business to act more humanely and responsibly. Thus was born the movement that culminated in New Deal liberalism.

New Deal Liberalism

In the United States, the argument in favor of state intervention did not win a truly popular constituency until after the Great Depression of the 1930s began to be felt deeply. The disastrous effects of a depression that left a quarter of the workforce unemployed opened the way to a new administration—and a promise. "I pledge you, I pledge myself," Franklin D. Roosevelt said when accepting the Democratic nomination in 1932, "to a new deal for the American people." Roosevelt's New Deal was an attempt to effect relief and recovery from the Depression; it employed a variety of means, including welfare programs, public works, and business regulation—most of which involved government intervention in the economy. The New Deal liberalism relied on government to liberate people from poverty, oppression, and economic

exploitation. At the same time, the New Dealers claimed to be as zealous as the classical liberals in defending political and civil liberties.

The common element in *laissez-faire* liberalism and welfare-state liberalism is their dedication to the goal of realizing the full potential of each individual. Some still questioned whether this is best done by minimizing state involvement or whether it sometimes requires an activist state. The New Dealers took the latter view, though they prided themselves on being pragmatic and experimental about their activism. During the heyday of the New Deal, a wide variety of programs were tried and—if found wanting—abandoned. All decent means should be tried, they believed, even if it meant dilution of ideological purity. The Roosevelt administration, for example, denounced bankers and businessmen in campaign rhetoric but worked very closely with them while trying to extricate the nation from the Depression. This set a pattern of pragmatism that New Dealers from Harry Truman to Lyndon Johnson emulated.

Progressive Liberalism

Progressive liberalism emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s as a more militant and uncompromising movement than the New Deal had ever been. Its roots go back to the New Left student movement of the early 1960s. New Left students went to the South to participate in civil rights demonstrations, and many of them were bloodied in confrontations with southern police; by the mid-1960s they were confronting the authorities in the North over issues like poverty and the Vietnam War. By the end of the decade, the New Left had fragmented into a variety of factions and had lost much of its vitality, but a somewhat more respectable version of it appeared as the New Politics movement. Many New Politics crusaders were former New Leftists who had traded their jeans for coats and ties; they tried to work within the system instead of always confronting it. Even so, they retained some of the spirit of the New Left. The civil rights slogan "Freedom Now" expressed the mood of the New Politics. The young university graduates who filled its ranks had come from an environment where "nonnegotiable" demands were issued to college deans by leaders of sit-in protests. There was more than youthful arrogance in the New Politics movement, however; there was a pervasive belief that America had lost, had compromised away, much of its idealism. The New Politics liberals sought to recover some of that spirit by linking up with an older tradition of militant reform, which went back to the time of the Revolution. These new liberals saw themselves as the authentic heirs of Thomas Paine and Henry David Thoreau, of the abolitionists, the radical populists, the suffragettes, and the great progressive reformers of the early twentieth century.

While New Deal liberals concentrated almost exclusively on bread-and-butter issues such as unemployment and poverty, the New Politics liberals introduced what came to be known as social issues into the political arena. These included: the repeal of laws against abortion, the liberalization of laws against homosexuality and pornography, the establishment of affirmative

action programs to ensure increased hiring of minorities and women, and the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. In foreign policy, too, New Politics liberals departed from the New Deal agenda. Because they had keener memories of the unpopular and (for them) unjustified war in Vietnam than of World War II, they became doves, in contrast to the general hawkishness of the New Dealers. They were skeptical of any claim that the United States must be the leader of the free world or, indeed, that it had any special mission in the world; some were convinced that America was already in decline and must learn to adjust accordingly. The real danger, they argued, came not from the Soviet Union but from the mad pace of our arms race with the Soviets, which, as they saw it, could bankrupt the country, starve our social programs, and culminate in a nuclear Armageddon.

New Politics liberals were heavily represented at the 1972 Democratic national convention, which nominated South Dakota senator George McGovern for president. By the 1980s the New Politics movement was no longer new, and many of its adherents preferred to be called progressives. By this time their critics had another name for them: radicals. The critics saw their positions as inimical to the interests of the United States, destructive of the family, and fundamentally at odds with the views of most Americans. The adversaries of the progressives were not only conservatives but many New Deal liberals, who openly scorned the McGovernites.

This split still exists within the Democratic party, though it is now more skillfully managed by party leaders. In 1988 the Democrats paired Michael Dukakis, whose Massachusetts supporters were generally on the progressive side of the party, with New Dealer Lloyd Bentsen as the presidential and vice-presidential candidates, respectively. In 1992 the Democrats won the presidency with Arkansas governor Bill Clinton, whose record as governor seemed to put him in the moderate-to-conservative camp, and Tennessee senator Albert Gore, whose position on environmental issues could probably be considered quite liberal but whose general image was middle-of-the-road. Both candidates had moved toward liberal positions on the issues of gay rights and abortion. By 1994 Clinton was perceived by many Americans as being "too liberal," which some speculate may have been a factor in the defeat of Democrats in the congressional elections that year. Since then, Clinton has gone to some lengths to shake off that perception, positioning himself as a "moderate" between extremes and casting the Republicans as an "extremist" party. (These two terms will be examined presently.) By the 1996 presidential elections, many, if not most, Americans were inclined to agree with Clinton's assessment.

Conservatism

Like liberalism, conservatism has undergone historical transformation in America. Just as early liberals (represented by Thomas Jefferson) espoused less government, early conservatives (whose earliest leaders were Alexander Hamilton and John Adams) urged government support of economic enter-

prise and government intervention on behalf of privileged groups. By the time of the New Deal, and in reaction to the growth of the welfare state since that time, conservatives had argued strongly that more government means more unjustified interference in citizens' lives, more bureaucratic regulation of private conduct, more inhibiting control of economic enterprise, more material advantage for the less energetic and less able at the expense of those who are prepared to work harder and better, and, of course, more taxes—taxes that will be taken from those who have earned money and given to those who have not.

Contemporary conservatives are not always opposed to state intervention. They may support larger military expenditures in order to protect society against foreign enemies. They may also allow for some intrusion into private life in order to protect society against internal subversion and would pursue criminal prosecution zealously in order to protect society against domestic violence. The fact is that few conservatives, and perhaps fewer liberals, are absolute with respect to their views about the power of the state. Both are quite prepared to use the state in order to further *their* purposes. It is true that activist presidents such as Franklin Roosevelt and John Kennedy were likely to be classified as liberals. However, Richard Nixon was also an activist, and, although he does not easily fit any classification, he was far closer to conservatism than to liberalism. It is too easy to identify liberalism with statism and conservatism with antistatism; it is important to remember that it was liberal Jefferson who counseled against "energetic government" and conservative Alexander Hamilton who designed bold powers for the new central government and wrote, "Energy in the executive is a leading character in the definition of good government."

Neoconservatism and the New Right

Two newer varieties of conservatism have arisen to challenge the dominant strain of conservatism that opposed the New Deal. Those who call themselves (or have finally allowed themselves to be called) neoconservatives are recent converts to conservatism. Many of them are former New Deal Democrats, and some like to argue that it is not they who have changed, it is the Democratic party, which has allowed itself to be taken over by advocates of progressive liberalism. They recognize, as did the New Dealers, the legitimacy of social reform, but now they warn against carrying it too far and creating an arrogant bureaucracy. They support equal opportunity, as they always did, but now they underscore the distinction between equal opportunity and equality of result, which they identify as the goal of affirmative action programs. Broadly speaking, neoconservatism shares with the older variety of conservatism a high respect for tradition and a view of human nature that some would call pessimistic. Neoconservatives, like all conservatives, are also deeply concerned about the communist threat to America. They advise shoring up America's defenses and resisting any movement that would lead the nation toward unilateral disarmament.

A more recent and more politically active variant of conservatism is called the New Right. Despite the semantic resemblance between the New Right and neoconservatism, the two differ in important ways. Neoconservatives are usually lapsed liberals, while New Rightists tend to be dyed-in-the-wool conservatives—though ones who are determined to appeal to wider constituencies than did the "old" Right. Neoconservatives tend to be academics who appeal to other similar elites through books and articles in learned journals. The New Right aims at reaching grassroots voters through a variety of forums, from church groups to direct-mail solicitation. Neoconservatives customarily talk about political-economic structures and global strategies; New Rightists emphasize the concerns of ordinary Americans, what they call family issues—moral concerns such as abortion, prayer in public schools, pornography, and what they consider to be a general climate of moral breakdown in the nation. These family issues are very similar to the social issues introduced into the political arena by the advocates of progressive liberalism. This should not be surprising, since the rise of the New Right was a reaction to the previous success of the progressive movement in legitimizing its stands on social issues.

Spokesmen for progressive liberalism and the New Right stand as polar opposites: The former regard abortion as a woman's right; the latter see it as legalized murder. The former tend to regard homosexuality as a lifestyle that needs protection against discrimination; the latter are more likely to see it as a perversion. The former have made an issue of their support for the Equal Rights Amendment; the latter includes large numbers of women who fought against the amendment because they believed it threatened their role identity. The list of issues could go on. The New Right and the progressive liberals are like positive and negative photographs of America's moral landscape. Sociologist James Davison Hunter uses the term *culture wars* to characterize the struggles between these contrary visions of America. For all the differences between progressive liberalism and the New Right, however, their styles are very similar. They are heavily laced with moralistic prose; they tend to equate compromise with selling out; and they claim to represent the best, most authentic traditions of America. This is not to denigrate either movement, for the kinds of issues they address are indeed moral issues, which do not generally admit much compromise. These issues cannot simply be finessed or ignored, despite the efforts of conventional politicians to do so. They must be aired and fought over, which is why we include some of them, such as abortion (Issue 16) and public school prayer (Issue 17), in this volume.

RADICALS, REACTIONARIES, AND MODERATES

The label *reactionary* is almost an insult, and the label *radical* is worn with pride by only a few zealots on the banks of the political mainstream. A reactionary is not a conserver but a backward-mover, dedicated to turning the clock back to better times. Most people suspect that reactionaries would

restore us to a time that never was, except in political myth. For many, the repeal of industrialism or universal education (or the entire twentieth century itself) is not a practical, let alone desirable, political program.

Radicalism (literally meaning "from the roots" or "going to the foundation") implies a fundamental reconstruction of the social order. Taken in that sense, it is possible to speak of right-wing radicalism as well as left-wing radicalism—radicalism that would restore or inaugurate a new hierarchical society as well as radicalism that calls for nothing less than an egalitarian society. The term is sometimes used in both of these senses, but most often the word *radicalism* is reserved to characterize more liberal change. While the liberal would effect change through conventional democratic processes, the radical is likely to be skeptical about the ability of the established machinery to bring about the needed change and might be prepared to sacrifice "a little" liberty to bring about a great deal more equality.

Moderate is a highly coveted label in America. Its meaning is not precise, but it carries the connotations of sensible, balanced, and practical. A moderate person is not without principles, but he or she does not allow principles to harden into dogma. The opposite of moderate is *extremist,* a label most American political leaders eschew. Yet there have been notable exceptions. When Arizona senator Barry Goldwater, a conservative Republican, was nominated for president in 1964, he declared, "Extremism in defense of liberty is no vice! ... Moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue!" This open embrace of extremism did not help his electoral chances; Goldwater was overwhelmingly defeated. At about the same time, however, another American political leader also embraced a kind of extremism, and with better results. In a famous letter written from a jail cell in Birmingham, Alabama, the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., replied to the charge that he was an extremist not by denying it but by distinguishing between different kinds of extremists. The question, he wrote, "is not whether we will be extremist but what kind of extremist will we be. Will we be extremists for hate, or will we be extremists for love?" King aligned himself with the love extremists, in which category he also placed Jesus, St. Paul, and Thomas Jefferson, among others. It was an adroit use of a label that is usually anathema in America.

PLURALISM

The principle of pluralism espouses diversity in a society containing many interest groups and in a government containing competing units of power. This implies the widest expression of competing ideas, and in this way, pluralism is in sympathy with an important element of liberalism. However, as James Madison and Alexander Hamilton pointed out when they analyzed the sources of pluralism in their *Federalist* commentaries on the Constitution, this philosophy springs from a profoundly pessimistic view of human nature, and in this respect it more closely resembles conservatism. Madison, possibly the single most influential member of the convention that wrote

the Constitution, hoped that in a large and varied nation, no single interest group could control the government. Even if there were a majority interest, it would be unlikely to capture all of the national agencies of government—the House of Representatives, the Senate, the presidency and the federal judiciary —each of which was chosen in a different way by a different constituency for a different term of office. Moreover, to make certain that no one branch exercised excessive power, each was equipped with "checks and balances" that enabled any agency of national government to curb the powers of the others. The clearest statement of Madison's, and the Constitution's, theory can be found in the 51st paper of the *Federalist:*

> It may be a reflection on human nature that such devices should be necessary to control the abuses of government. But what is government itself, but the greatest of all reflections on human nature? If men were angels, no government would be necessary.

This pluralist position may be analyzed from different perspectives. It is conservative insofar as it rejects simple majority rule; yet it is liberal insofar as it rejects rule by a single elite. It is conservative in its pessimistic appraisal of human nature; yet pluralism's pessimism is also a kind of egalitarianism, holding as it does that no one can be trusted with power and that majority interests no less than minority interests will use power for selfish ends. It is possible to suggest that in America pluralism represents an alternative to both liberalism and conservatism. Pluralism is antimajoritarian and antielitist and combines some elements of both.

SOME APPLICATIONS

Despite our effort to define the principal alignments in American politics, some policy decisions do not neatly fit into these categories. Readers will reach their own conclusions, but we may suggest some alignments to be found here in order to demonstrate the variety of viewpoints.

The conflicts between liberalism and conservatism are expressed in the opposing approaches of Lois Forer and James Wootton to the question of how to deal with crime (Issue 9). Wootton's defense of mandatory sentencing proceeds from the conservative premise that the best way to fight crime is to get criminals off of the streets and to show would-be criminals that punishment for crime will be swift and certain. Forer, who believes that most violent crime is impulsive, adopts the liberal view that society should aim to rehabilitate rather than simply punish criminals. More difficult to classify is the issue of whether or not the government regulates too much (Issue 7). Susan Tolchin and Martin Tolchin's defense of government regulation is compatible with either New Deal or progressive liberalism, while Robert Charles's case against regulation is reminiscent of classical liberalism, or libertarianism.

Robert Lee's defense of the death penalty (Issue 10) is a classic conservative argument. Like other conservatives, Lee is skeptical of the possibilities of

human perfection, and he therefore regards retribution—giving a murderer what he or she "deserves" instead of attempting some sort of "rehabilitation"—as a legitimate goal of punishment. Affirmative action (Issue 12) has become a litmus test of the newer brand of progressive liberalism. The progressives say that it is not enough for the laws of society to be color-blind or gender-blind; they must now reach out to remedy the ills caused by racism and sexism. New Deal liberals, along with conservatives and libertarians, generally oppose affirmative action, which they regard as racism in reverse. In the welfare debate (Issue 14) the lineup is different. Both New Dealers and progressive liberals are likely to agree with Marc Breslow that the "failure" of welfare must be attributed not to welfare itself but to the inadequate funding of it; the conservative argument that welfare spending needs to be reduced is maintained by Newt Gingrich. A similarly clear-cut division between liberal (both New Deal and progressive) and conservative philosophies can be found in Issue 15 on whether or not a flat tax is fair. House majority leader Dick Armey supports a flat tax not only because he considers it a model of fairness and simplicity but because it may force reductions in "the spending levels of forty years of big government liberalism." John Stamm and Suleyken Walker, who oppose the plan, argue from the liberal premise that the only fair tax is a progressive tax.

Former federal court of appeals judge Robert Bork's case (in Issue 8) for using "original intent" as the basis of constitutional interpretation is a classic conservative argument, seeking as it does to extract from the thought of the Constitution's founders some authentic guide for interpreting the Constitution today. Leonard Levy's criticism of this approach is liberal in its insistence that the Constitution's meaning must change with the times.

Gay marriage (Issue 18) is also an issue that divides progressive liberals from conservatives. Andrew Sullivan defends gay marriage on the liberal grounds of equal treatment, while James Q. Wilson, whose views are more conservative, worries about what is might do to the institution of marriage. Another more or less predictable division between liberals and conservatives is on the issue of gun control (Issue 11). Liberals generally agree with Carl Bogus's view that stronger gun control laws than currently exist may reduce gun violence and at any rate are worth trying. Conservatives tend to agree with Daniel Polsby, who maintains that if gun control laws are tightened, criminals will be all the more tempted to use guns while committing crimes because they could then be reasonably sure that law-abiding citizens will not be carrying their own guns for self-defense.

It may seem strange to lump together those who favor the right to own guns with those who favor prayers in public schools, but that is the way many conservatives align themselves. Perhaps the link lies somewhere in our history. "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition," a World War II song, sums up what many Americans still admire: the heroic soldier or cowboy who combines feisty individualism with religious reverence. Perhaps a bit of both is in William Murray, son of Madeline Murray O'Hare, the woman who