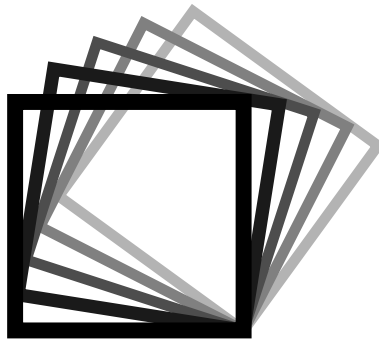


PROGRESSIVE FRAMING

THE CHARLESTON THINK TANK

April 27, 2018



This document is the work of the Charleston, Illinois Think Tank. It began with our study of the framing methods of George Lakoff. Using his ideas, we formed progressive framing ideas on many topics. For comparison, we list common counter-frames that non-progressives use. In the Real Life section for each topic, we have tried to concisely describe what occurs in real life. It is our hope that this document will help progressively-minded people express progressive ideas with good framing, be it in a letter to the editor, a letter to an elected official, a stump speech, or just talking points.

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Environment

| TOPIC | Progressive View | Other Viewpoints | Real Life |
|----------------------------|---|--|---|
| Climate Terminology | Climate Crisis is an urgent situation that we need to address now. There is no Planet B. | Global Warming and Climate Change are hoaxes. It's natural fluctuation. | We should be in a cooling cycle and we're in a rapidly warming cycle. Science shows that the climate crisis is real, largely driven by human activity that is changing our world in ways that will destroy humanity. |
| Nature | Nature nurtures and shapes us and has value beyond the resources we take from it. It's in our best interests to protect it and use it wisely. Nature is never free for the taking; destroying or depleting it places costs elsewhere. Nature is finite. | Natural resources are for the benefit (profit) of man, to be used freely. Nature is big enough to absorb/take the damage that we do. | There is no Planet B. If we don't take care of our world, we risk destroying the future for our children. The 1% use the resources of the earth with no thought of how we all depend on the earth, no thought of sharing. The free water and air that we let corporations pollute hurts the public, either by the harm done or the cost to clean it up. This is economic and moral theft - short-term profit causing long-term destruction. |
| Animal Welfare | Animals share our planet and deserve respectful treatment. Protect endangered species. Ban trophy hunting. Phase out plastic pollution. | People are superior to animals. Animals are resources to use as we see fit. | Corporate farming leads to disregard for the quality of life of animals and to treating animals in a manner that is unhealthy for them and potentially unhealthy for people. The current administration has removed protections and regulations governing puppy mills, trophy hunting, migratory birds, and hunting hibernating bears. This puts endangered species and animals in national parks at risk. |
| Earth as Home | It's our only home - our future depends on maintaining and protecting our planet. | Man has dominion over the Earth to use as we see fit. | We all share the air we breathe, the water we drink, the land we live on, and the food we eat. We must take responsibility for each other if we are to survive and thrive. |
| Farmland Usage | Our nation's farmland is a finite and valuable asset that must be properly cared for and protected. | Growth is good whether it's growing more crops or building on farmland. America is the breadbasket of the world. Farms run by businesses are more efficient. | Many current farming practices (monoculture, excessive tillage, over-dependence on chemicals, etc.) waste energy, deplete our soil, and pollute our streams. Smaller, landowner farmers have a stake in sustaining their land unlike large corporate farms that rent tens of thousands of acres. Urban sprawl takes valuable farmland out of production. Ethanol isn't an efficient energy source or the best use of corn. |

Environment

| TOPIC | Progressive View | Other Viewpoints | Real Life |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Unseen Cost of Doing Business | You break it, you fix it. Businesses should not be allowed to externalize costs. | It's good business practice to exploit natural resources to create wealth and jobs. Greed is good. Profit is good. | Dumping pollution, blowing off mountain tops, leaving pipelines in the ocean, letting fertilizer run off - "Externalizations of costs" increase profits by harming nature and not repairing it. A moral business should not abandon the damage it causes. |
| Environment Policy | End subsidies to dirty energy. Support recycling, renewable energy, green building, EPA and science. Rejoin Paris Climate Accord. | Roll back EPA rules. Deny climate change. | Most citizens accept the science of climate change and favor renewable energy over fossil fuels. Our policies should be guided by science. The 1% think that they can isolate themselves from or use their wealth to survive environmental disasters. Corporate profit has no motive to protect the environment. Only through significant public action will we protect our environment. |

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

Lakoff suggests alternative metaphors of nature as mother, as a divine being, as a living organism, as a home, as a victim to be cared for, and a whole with us as parts inseparable from nature and from each other.

Stress the savings that businesses can gain if they go green and waste less energy (plus good PR).

Nature nurtures and shapes us. We all own the air.

"Living sustainably isn't a hippie thing, it's a survival thing." "Killing earth = killing ourselves"

Climate crisis is complicated to explain – Lakoff lists four types of systemic causations. Of these four, the feedback loop is probably the easiest for people to grasp: "The polar ice cap is supposed to reflect heat and light from the sun. As the earth warms, the polar ice cap starts to melt. The more it melts, the less heat and light get reflected, the more the earth gets heated, the more the ice melts." People confuse weather with climate. (Climate is the weather conditions prevailing in an area in general over a long period.) Too often people take "warming" in just the local sense, complaining that it's cold where they live.

Energy

| TOPIC | Progressive View | Other Viewpoints | Real Life |
|--|--|---|--|
| Oil, Coal, Natural Gas | Old, polluting energies, dirty energy industries, unsafe, limited - once it's gone, it's gone. Stop subsidizing dirty energy. Subsidies to energy pervert the free market. | It's there to use; we need energy independence; provides jobs. | Fossil fuels are limited - it takes millions of years for them to form. Obtaining fossil fuels often destroys the land, air, and water. Burning them also pollutes the air and speeds up the climate crisis. Our present transportation, including the military, heavily relies on oil. |
| Fossil Fuel Extraction | Does permanent damage to soil, air, and water, so why not transition to renewables now. | We have the technology, it provides jobs, it's what we know how to do. | For citizens, conservation wins. For coal and oil companies, mining and drilling win. Extraction methods lead to earthquakes, gas leaks, destruction of land, water pollution, and oil spills. We need to transition from old destructive sources of energy to sustainable sources. |
| Sun, Wind, Water, Soil Energies | Eternally present, renewable, and cost-effective, new energy economy, true energy independence. | Too costly. Unreliable. | The technology is present to switch over to clean energy. Costs are coming down. The obstacles include retraining workers in the new industry and building the infrastructure for it. |
| Nuclear power | It's not clean or inexpensive and has a huge potential for harm. | It's limitless clean energy. | Nuclear energy poses threats in the form of man-made and natural accidents. Radiation is lethal and the worst form of pollution. Accidental release of radiation from reactors, storage of waste that is highly radioactive for ten thousand years, and the potential theft of uranium make nuclear energy more of a problem than a solution. Once you factor in all of the costs of nuclear plants, the net energy gain is debatable. |
| Farmland | It can feed us forever if we care for it. Clean soil means clean food. | We can drill for oil under this farmland. | In the long run, a farm's soil (if properly cared for) is worth more than the oil underneath. Ethanol isn't an efficient energy source or the best use of corn. |
| Conservation | Energy saved is energy you don't need to produce. Recycling creates jobs. Energy conservation is the way of the future. Preventing conservation is wasteful. Subsidize conservation. | More is always better. Subsidize drilling and mining. Don't change the American way of life. Conservation is too expensive. | For any dollar invested, conservation gives you the biggest bang for your buck. Drilling and mining destroy, while conserving saves. Conservation is a long-term plan that is better for the planet. It requires costs up front, investment, and education which government policy can encourage through tax credits and subsidies. |
| Transportation | Invest in expanding trains, carpool lanes, mass transit, and bike lanes. Require fuel efficient cars. | I want the freedom to go where I want, when I want. Driving a car is the American way. Gas is cheap. | The American trait of individualism fuels/drives our obsession with owning a car. So many cars lead to traffic congestion, air pollution, and accidents. Air travel has a higher carbon footprint. Explore the re-use of biological materials for fuel. Improve our driving habits. |

Economy

| TOPIC | Progressive View | Other Viewpoints | Real Life |
|------------------------------------|---|--|--|
| American Dream | The opportunity to lead a decent productive life should be accessible to all. The goal is for no American to be illiterate, homeless, or living in poverty. | The American dream is for those who work for it or inherit it. | The America Dream is getting further and further out of reach for more and more people. |
| Globalization | It is a global economy and we are all in this together. | America First, Make America Great Again. Walls, travel ban, isolationism, protectionism. | Technology and travel are bringing us closer together. The ease of movement of labor and capital has allowed corporations to exploit globalization to the detriment of ordinary workers around the world. |
| Living Wage | A full time job should provide wages that are adequate to live on. | Destroys small businesses and interferes with the free market. | Wages have been stagnant since the 70's while executive salaries have risen dramatically. Two workers are often needed to support a family and many workers hold two or more jobs. |
| Wall Street vs. Main Street | People over profit. Main Street is hurting. Trickle Up Economics. Reduce corporate influence in Congress. | Wall Street and big business rule. Trickle Down Economics. | Past conventional wisdom said if Wall St. prospers, everyone does well. Trickle down has never worked and never will. Decades of mergers have robbed the country of jobs and businesses that anchored our communities. It's time once again to break up monopolies. Businesses are making record profits - they don't need tax breaks or incentives. |

ADDITIONAL NOTES: The focus of a financial or economic system should be to create job opportunities not just create wealth for investors. "True individual freedom cannot exist without economic security and independence." FDR. CEO salaries compared to wage earners in 2014 were 300-to-1.

Healthcare

| TOPIC | Progressive View | Other Viewpoints | Real Life |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Right vs. Privilege | Healthcare is a human right. | Healthcare is a privilege. | Lack of access to adequate healthcare makes it hard to thrive and achieve and leads to shortened lives. Women, minorities, and the poor get less pay for equal jobs or have low skill/low pay jobs so are disadvantaged by the private insurance system. It's time to declare healthcare is a right for all human beings regardless of race, gender, religion, ethnicity, ability/disability health status, or financial status. Costs of inadequate care get passed on to everyone. |
| ACA | Fix it. It is a good start. | Repeal it. It is a disaster. | Between Medicaid expansion and marketplace subsidies, the number of Americans without access to care is at an all-time low. Ditto for uncompensated care at hospitals and ERs. ACA is just beginning to stabilize healthcare. Requiring ten essential benefits, covering dependents until age 26, eliminating lifetime caps, exemptions for pre-existing conditions, and the Medicare D coverage gap are improvements made by the ACA. Genuine problems exist such as increasing premiums and pharmaceutical costs. Working together to fix ACA problems is the immediate answer and is favored by the majority of Americans. |
| Quality healthcare for all | Care is key. Adequate healthcare for everyone. Healthcare is a right and should not be profit driven. | Never socialism! Government is wasteful and inefficient. Keep government small. | The long-term answer. We are the only industrialized nation with no national healthcare program for all. The program we have for seniors (Medicare) covers eligible seniors at age 65 no matter their health. It is efficient and has generally high satisfaction ratings. Preventive care and regular checkups are much less expensive than treating more advanced conditions. Administrative overhead for Medicare is less than 5% compared to private insurance which is much higher. Lifting the burden of employee healthcare will make businesses more competitive and may increase full-time employment. Job lock, COBRA, work comp issues would be simplified or eliminated. The leading cause of bankruptcy would be eliminated. |
| Public Health | Society as a whole benefits when we are all healthy. We all have responsibilities to do our part in dealing with health issues that affect everybody. | The government can't tell me what to do with my healthcare. Immunizations may be optional. | Preventive care such as physicals and immunizations are important. Re-emergence of old childhood diseases like mumps and whooping cough are urgent public health concerns as are emerging strains of resistant TB. The government has the responsibility to insure the health and welfare of citizens that includes research to prevent and handle epidemics. |

Healthcare

| TOPIC | Progressive View | Other Viewpoints | Real Life |
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| Public Support for Medical Research | We need to invest in prevention programs and research. | Cut government funding for research. Leave research up to private entities. | Most major medical advances come from government-funded research. Privatizing research limits objectivity and limits it to areas that are profitable, and results are not necessarily available to the public. Lobbyists affect what public institutions research. Our healthcare policy decisions should be based on science. |
| Paying for Healthcare | Care for all. Preventive care and timely treatment costs money up front, but saves in the long run. | Healthcare is a personal responsibility. | More people die from health issues (disease, malnutrition, etc.) than from terrorists or wars. Using our resources to provide healthcare would make us a stronger nation than the wall or even more for the military. We would get more bang for our buck if we rolled funding for Medicaid, 340B grants, Tricare and VA, War on Drugs, etc. into an expanded Medicare program that covers every citizen from cradle to grave. Relieving business from the burden of employee healthcare would make them more competitive and negate the need for tax cuts. Workers' Compensation issues may also be less problematic if who pays for needed healthcare is taken out of the equation. Personal and business bankruptcies due to medical bills/healthcare expenses would be eliminated. |
| Mental Health | Mental health is an integral part of health and well-being. | Mental health is a matter of character and personal responsibility: pull yourself up by your bootstraps. | ACA includes mental health coverage as one of ten essential benefits. Social and physical environments affect health. Mental health issues, as any other health issues, have a negative impact on individuals, family, and society and are far less costly to treat earlier than later. Stigma attached to mental health issues often prevents people from seeking help. Genetic pre-dispositions need to be considered also. |
| Opioid Crisis/ Substance Abuse | Public health issue. Pointless to assign blame. The goal is reduce harm and improve people's lives. | Criminal issue, people need to be punished rather than treated. | Substance abuse includes alcohol, tobacco, as well as drugs. Treatment covered by ACA as a healthcare issue rather than simply as a criminal issue is much more likely to produce positive results. Over-prescription of opioids driven by pharmaceutical profit within the healthcare system must continue to be addressed with re-education and alternate treatment options as a first step in preventing addiction. We need to understand addiction as both a medical and social issue. Criminalization of substance abuse is used as a means of social control and is used to suppress some groups to the advantage of others. The productivity of individuals affected by addiction is often compromised. Opioid overdoses have increased significantly in the last 10 years. Our culture wants a quick fix for everything which discourages looking into other alternatives to drugs. |

Healthcare

| TOPIC | Progressive View | Other Viewpoints | Real Life |
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| Privacy Rights | Insurance companies shouldn't profit from collecting and selling our personal health data. | Any way to make profit is legitimate. | Healthcare decisions should be private between patients and their doctors. Insurance MBA's are making care decisions that determine how healthy we will be. |
| Abortion/ Planned Parenthood/- Family planning | Protect women's rights to make decisions about their bodies. | Baby killers. Pro-life. Health insurance shouldn't cover birth control. My morality trumps your privacy. | Planned Parenthood is a healthcare provider for women, providing a wide range of services that include wellness checkups, preventive screenings, in addition to family planning. Abortions account for only 3% of their services. The abortion rate is at an all-time low, largely due to access to contraception, appropriate sex education, and family planning. Common sense says "Keep it up!" so the rate approaches ZERO. Honest pro-life goes beyond birth to supporting the EPA, healthcare, gun control, abolishing the death penalty, and supporting social programs in general. The Conservative definition of pro-life is really only pro-birth. Roe v. Wade was decided on a woman's right to privacy. |
| ADA | It is incumbent upon society to remove the barriers that keep all people from fully participating and achieving their full potential. Kindness and compassion make our society better. Protect the ADA. | Regulations are cumbersome and put a burden on businesses and taxpayers. Regulations impede the free market. | The ADA has made great progress in removing barriers and the costs have been minimal. In addition, the ACA made it possible for people with disabilities to work without losing healthcare. Current efforts to undermine these two laws is a step backwards, putting some barriers back in place. |

ADDITIONAL NOTES: Instead of pro-choice, use pro-family or pro-health. What conservatives call birth control, progressives should call family planning or pregnancy prevention. Don't refer to an embryo or fetus as a baby - conservatives do this to invoke the image of a baby that has been born.

Voting Rights and Processes

| TOPIC | Progressive View | Other Viewpoints | Real Life |
|-------------------------|---|--|--|
| Right to Vote | Voting is a right not a privilege. Everyone eligible should be able to register without undue burden and to cast their ballot in a timely and efficient manner. | Voting is a privilege <i>not</i> a right. Only those willing to make sure they are properly registered and that they get to the polls in a timely manner should have the privilege of having their vote counted. | Access to voter registration and the ability to get to the polls in the face of other work and family obligations varies widely from state to state. Voter suppression is a thinly disguised effort to perpetuate “White Republican Christian” control of the country. |
| Voter Fraud | Experience shows we can trust people to vote where and when they should and not to vote where they shouldn’t. | Huge numbers of non-citizens are voting in our elections. The Democrats support illegal immigration so that those immigrants can vote for them. | Studies show voter fraud is almost non-existent. An individual has a better chance of being hit by lightning than of having their vote cancelled by someone voting illegally. The Trump administration is propagating blatantly incorrect information and seems bent upon promoting stricter registration requirements and suppressing the vote. |
| Registration | Voter registration should be simple and convenient. All legal voters should have easy access to registration. | Reasonable for registration process to discourage uncommitted or uninformed voters. | Stringent voter ID requirements can be onerous, even impossible for some to meet. Voter lists are purged at the discretion of individual states. Cyber security and maintenance practices need to be updated and standardized. |
| Casting Ballots | Voters have the right to be able to cast their ballots in a convenient manner. | States have the constitutional right to determine the best way to use their resources to provide polling opportunities. | Voting by mail, early voting, etc. are available but not on a regular or uniform basis. Polling station hours and the number and location of polling stations can be manipulated to support voting in some areas and suppress it in others. Election day should be a national holiday, like it is in other countries, with a uniformly secure and verifiable system. |
| Counting Ballots | Every vote counts. Counting must be accurate with a reliable paper trail for possible recounts. | Voting machines are convenient and reliable. | Voting machines simply cannot be trusted without a paper trail for potential recounts, a solid process for preserving them, the ability to audit the software as well as the performance. Some electronic systems have no printed record of ballots that are cast. |
| Redistricting | Redistricting should be done by a non-partisan procedure. | States have the constitutional right to determine the districts | Gerrymandering is simply out of hand. There are states where fewer than 50% of the votes can result in 65-75% of the seats. This is not acceptable. |

Voting Rights and Processes

| TOPIC | Progressive View | Other Viewpoints | Real Life |
|-----------------------------|---|--|---|
| Foreign Influence | The entire integrity of our election system must be evaluated and secured. Foreign interference needs to be examined and investigated. | It's a hoax. It's a witch hunt. Fake news. | Social media anonymity masks the true source of the information that is crucial to a well-informed electorate. Voter registration systems have been hacked by foreign interests. |
| Funding of Elections | Overtake Citizens United. Corporations are not people. Publicly fund elections. Campaign finance reform. Origins of all donations, including PACs, should be a matter of public record. | Keep Citizens United. Donations are considered free speech. Corporations are people. No public funding for elections and no campaign finance reform. | As a result of Citizens United, wealthy people and corporations have substantially increased influence in candidate nomination, the financing of campaigns, and candidate policies. Candidates in state elections often receive large campaign contributions from out-of-state entities. These trends disproportionately benefit wealthy people and corporations. Current legislators are forced to spend large amounts of time fundraising from wealthy donors as opposed to governing. Lobbyists representing corporations have more influence on legislators than do citizens. |

Immigration

| TOPIC | Progressive View | Other Viewpoints | Real Life |
|--|---|--|--|
| Control and enforcement | Stop ruthless ICE raids and deportations. Create reasonable pathway to legal status. | Build a wall. Travel ban. | There are VISA problems and loopholes that should be addressed (H1B and EB-5). Need a pathway to citizenship for DREAMERS. Reform our immigration procedures and laws. |
| Who are immigrants? | Foreign nationals who come to the U.S. to work, to study, or to join other family members. | Aliens coming into our country illegally. | Immigrants are people. Three-quarters of the population that is foreign-born are legal. Immigrants make up 13% of the general population. Close to 47% are citizens. Currently, net immigration from Mexico is 0. Undocumented immigrants are about 3.5% of the general population. |
| Why do people immigrate to the U.S.? | To seek better opportunities and a better life for themselves and their families. To escape poverty, persecution, and violence. To join family members. | They're seeking the American Dream. | Visa programs are being abused by bringing in immigrants in order to replace higher paid workers with lower wage immigrants, sometimes claiming there are no qualified native workers. Visa programs need to be re-evaluated. |
| Is immigration good for the U.S.? | Yes. We are a nation of immigrants. Influx of fresh blood and talent enrich our culture. Diversity makes us stronger and is good for our country. | No. Immigrants don't speak our language, don't share our values or religion and dilute our national identity. They compete for jobs, bring crime, sell drugs, and are terrorists. It costs us to take care of them. We need to look after our own to protect our communities and values. | In reality, undocumented immigrants are not eligible for many US public benefits but they pay taxes that support these benefits. Studies show that immigrants are less likely than native citizens to commit crimes. Many immigrants are entrepreneurs and job creators, taxpayers, and consumers and contribute to the economy. |
| Are some immigrants more valuable than others? Who should be allowed to come to the U.S.? | Immigration should be based on the value of diversity. | Emphasis is on highly-trained immigrants. | Traditionally, those wishing to join family members were given priority but this is currently under attack. Highly trained immigrants are now given priority. By importing skilled workers, we are neglecting the need to educate our own population. |

Immigration

| TOPIC | Progressive View | Other Viewpoints | Real Life |
|---|---|---|---|
| Is assimilation of immigrants important? | Assimilation is not an issue, it happens naturally. Diversity makes us stronger and is good for our country. | Complete assimilation is essential. Only immigrants of white Europeans background share our cultural values. | Access to quality public education is the best guarantee that immigrants will become productive members of society and embrace our democratic form of government. Immigrants already share many of our values. |
| Issue: Language | The influx of other languages enriches the English language. | To be American, you must speak English. Many immigrants refuse to learn English. | The Constitution does not specify an official language. Most immigrants learn to speak English over time. |
| Issue: Religion | Our democracy is based on a separation of church and state. Our country was founded on the idea of religious freedom. | The U.S. is a Christian nation with Christian values. Muslims practice Sharia law. Hindus believe in many gods. | The Constitution specifically spells out freedom of religion - there is no official American religion. |
| Issue: Race | The only race is the human race. All humans are created equal. | The white race is superior. Keep America white. | Race is not a biological construct. It's a social construct based on superficial features that do not indicate character or ability. Diversity in the gene pool is important for the survival of the species. |
| Issue: Crime and terrorism | U.S. born citizens commit more crime than immigrants. | Latinos bring drugs, Muslims bring terrorism, Asians bring sex trafficking, Russians and Italians bring organized crime. They make us unsafe. | Most terrorism and crime in our country is domestic. Study after study has shown that immigrants - regardless of their country of origin, immigration status, or education level - are less likely than native born citizens to commit crimes or become incarcerated. |
| Issue: Legal rights | No person is illegal. All people deserve equal protection under the law. | They are illegal and don't deserve protection. They should be deported. | They have some Constitutional protections, but in practice they have very few protections. Currently, immigrants live in fear of ICE. |
| Issue: Refugees and asylum seekers | Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to be free. We have a moral obligation to help. | They threaten our national security. | We have the room and resources to accept refugees. We share the responsibility for the conditions that lead many people to leave their homeland. |

LGBTQ+

| TOPIC | Progressive View | Other Viewpoints | Real Life |
|---------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Marriage | Love is love. Marriage is a binding commitment that conveys legal rights between two consenting adults. | Marriage is between a man and a woman. | Preventing two people who love each other from marrying takes away their rights - inheritance rights, spousal pension rights, hospital visiting rights, adoption rights, tax status, healthcare, etc. |
| Rights | We are all born as individuals and have a right to live our lives as we choose as long as we do not harm others. All people should have equal rights. This includes the right to not face discrimination. No one is free until everyone is free. | Gay marriage destroys the institution of marriage. Selling to gay people is immoral so I should not have to. I have the right to fire LGBTQ people, etc. | Discrimination of any kind should be illegal. If it's okay to discriminate against another person, it's okay to discriminate against you. |
| Healthcare | Everyone has a right to quality care regardless of race, gender identity, age, citizenship, ability, disability, or economic status. | People who identify as LGBTQ+ are unnatural and immoral, so insurance should not pay for medical costs. Medical providers should not be required to care for them. | Denial of care under our current system leads to serious or even fatal consequences. Suffering, isolation, and stigmatization can result in a greater need for access to mental health services. Politicians are allowing providers and employers to impose their personal morality on others by restricting access to services. |
| Violence and Hate Crimes | There is no excuse for violence. People should not be targeted because they are in a specific group. | Hate crime laws are just a means of scapegoating people with strong moral principles. | Violence in our society is often directed against those who don't conform to the conservatives' view of "normal" or against those who are viewed as not strong enough to fight back. Hate speech is a form of violence. |
| Identity | Gender identity and sexual orientation are inborn. | Non-heterosexuals are abominations. It is a lifestyle choice. | Being different is not a choice, but who one is. So-called "conversion therapy" is harmful and doesn't work. Biblical ideas about sexuality are tied to their ancient historical and cultural context. |

Society

| TOPIC | Progressive View | Other Viewpoints | Real Life |
|----------------------------|---|---|---|
| Justice | Equality for All. Racial injustice is a common thread in our justice system. | Lock 'em up. Build more prisons. | Incarceration is vastly more expensive than rehabilitation. Kudos to the Coles County Drug Court. Prisons are being used for mentally ill people when they should be receiving healthcare. Efforts to crack down on crime have resulted in a huge increase in prison populations, broken families, and poverty. Justice and law enforcement systems need to be reformed to end racial discrimination. |
| Education | Quality public education for all ages is essential to a productive society and a functioning democracy. | Vouchers for school choice. Privatize "failing" public schools. | Education for all ages is now essential to stay employed in an evolving job market. People need to be life-long learners and education requires funding. Funding inequalities and socio-economic obstacles often compromise student achievement. |
| Gun Control | The 2nd Amendment protects the right to bear arms, but common sense gun control is needed. Weapons of war are for the military not ordinary citizens. Repeal Dickey amendment so we can allow government funding of research on gun violence. Reinstate the ban on assault weapons. | Don't touch our guns. Guns save lives. Guns don't kill, people do (mentally ill people). Expand gun rights. | Every day in the U.S. many children are shot, some fatally. Mass shootings that once horrified us now happen nearly every day. Gun permits, waiting periods, and background checks need to be more stringent to keep guns out of the hands of violent offenders. Elected officials are bought by the NRA which represents gun sellers not gun owners. |
| Culture of Violence | Pervasive violence in our culture should be addressed. Putting money into counseling and ending poverty is better than incarceration. Violence is a display of power. | Lock 'em up. Violence is a mental health issue. | Violence comes in many forms: Domestic violence, bullying, racism, abuse by law enforcement and people in power, violence against women and children, religious violence, etc. Violence results from anger, power, poverty, despair, etc. |
| Hate | Hatred is a learned behavior. United against hate. No to racism. | America is a white Christian nation. Anyone else is inferior. | Many Americans fear they are being left behind culturally and economically. Politicians use fear to incite hate and division. Diversity makes our country stronger and acceptance of differences should be intentionally taught. We have to break the cycle of manufacturing scapegoats for our problems. |
| Me Too | Sexual harassment/abuse is never okay. | Boys will be boys. | Vulnerable people feel unable to come forward. Non-disclosure contracts and settlements obscure the extent of the problem and protect abusers. We have not yet created an atmosphere where survivors feel safe to come forward and be believed. Congressional slush fund for payoffs needs to go. |

Public versus Private

| TOPIC | Progressive View | Other Viewpoints | Real Life |
|----------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Profits | Workers create profits and jobs. Those who share in the generation of profits deserve a fair share. Reducing income inequality boosts economic growth. | Profit at all cost. Profit creates jobs. | Jobs cannot be created without workers and a middle class with substantial buying power. When workers share in the profits, their buying power grows the economy. |
| Government Responsibility | The government has a basic responsibility for the protection and welfare of the American people. This includes education, healthcare, the armed forces, police, fire, transportation infrastructure, prisons, etc. | Government should do as little as possible. Privatize as much as possible. | People and businesses could not function without the infrastructure and protections that the government provides. Some problems are too big to be solved without government involvement. |
| Privatization | Replaces elected government with unelected corporate management controlling people's lives for profit rather than public good. Accountability is compromised. | Government is cumbersome, wasteful, and resistant to change. The free market is the most efficient. Socialism is bad. I make more money this way. | Privatization is using public money to subsidize private profits. Many products are efficiently produced by private companies, but roads, police, fire, water, etc are all run efficiently by government. As demonstrated by other countries, healthcare would be more efficient if run by the government. Prisons and security have also performed poorly when privatized. Accountability to the public is compromised. |
| Vouchers | Vouchers transfer money from the public to the private. | Vouchers support free choice. | Vouchers lead to privatization. Public institutions have mandates that private institutions can ignore. Vouchers are often hidden under other names: opportunity grants, tuition tax credits, health/education savings accounts. |

Public versus Private

| TOPIC | Progressive View | Other Viewpoints | Real Life |
|----------------------------|---|---|--|
| Taxes | Investment in our future. Your taxes at work for the common good. Less “corporate welfare.” Nobody does it alone. | Tax burden, tax relief, death tax. Cut taxes to create jobs. Tax breaks make businesses more competitive. | Taxes have built our public society. The wealth of our nation has been built with massive investments in infrastructure: universities, the interstate highway system, roads, airports, transportation, schools, the internet, police, fire, water, etc. Private companies depend on and profit from public infrastructure. |
| Business Taxes | True cost of doing business. | Tax breaks make businesses more competitive. | Every business uses public services and infrastructure so they should pay a fair share to support them. Businesses that abandon mine/factory sites that the public must pay to restore/clean up are not paying the full cost of their business. |
| Deficits | Revenue neglect, revenue depletion, undertaxing millionaires. | We cannot accept any budget that does not address the deficit unless we’re in power. | Conservatives selectively demonize deficits to justify privatizing and starving necessary services and government spending. Deficit reductions cannot be reduced to simple solutions. Just as a mortgage is a positive solution for buying a house, deficit spending can also be a positive investment in the future. |
| Government Spending | Investment and maintenance costs, improving lives. | Government waste and fraud, deficit creation. | Government spending builds the public and supports the private. |
| Pensions | Deferred pay, worker earned. | Entitlements, benefits. | A pension is part of a salary package and is earned (a percentage of your salary is deducted from your paycheck). Pension money is often siphoned away for other uses as in Illinois. |
| Safety Net | Social contract that society provides for those who need a safety net. | Entitlements. | A wealthy country like ours can afford to provide a safety net for citizens who cannot adequately meet their needs. |
| Services | Civic tasks that serve the common good. | Mail services, health services, etc. | Calling something a service makes it a product and suggests privatization. |

Government

| TOPIC | Progressive View | Other Viewpoints | Real Life |
|---|---|---|---|
| Who Influences Government Policy | Corporations are not people. Citizens United should be reversed. | Corporations are people. Citizens United properly acknowledges corporations have First Amendment speech rights. People with money have more at stake so should have more influence. | Money talks. Recent court decisions have extended citizens' rights to corporations, granting them disproportionate influence on government policy. Lobbyists have voices, but citizens don't. Costly negative campaigns discourage good candidates and make voters cynical about our government. |
| Politics/ Government | Balance of power and free press are essential to democracy. No to term limits; yes to money limits. | Drain the swamp! Disdain for political correctness. | Everyone is tired of dishonesty and negativity in election campaigns and government that isn't working for them. We need elected officials to serve their constituents and use citizen input. Campaign spending needs to be capped, lobbying severely restricted, gerrymandering corrected, and voting procedures modernized and secured. |