

Why I Vote Democrat

Though my parents were Republicans

By **Kat Avila, Contributing Writer** | Published on LatinoLA: October 31, 2012



As soon as I turned 18, I registered to vote. I signed on as a Republican, because my parents were Republicans and I was a fiscal conservative. However, I switched parties when I saw that the Republican platform was becoming increasingly sexist, racist, and religiously exclusionary (only Christians are "constitutional"), even as our society and a good chunk of the world matured in another direction.

That is not to say that anyone who is a Republican, or a Democrat for that matter, supports everything their party does, e.g., the enigmatic gay and lesbian Log Cabin Republicans. "Republican" and "Democrat" are political labels, one of many hats we all wear. There are good-hearted Republicans, and I embrace them because they are decent human beings, even if I strongly disagree with the P&Ps of their political party.

1. I vote DEMOCRAT because I support access to voting that is free of intimidation and harassment. In Orange County in 1988, Curt Pringle and the Republican Party targeted heavily Latino residential areas for voter suppression.

Last week, I recounted my experience of that time to a busload of mostly Latino and African-American passengers. I told a white passenger who was not going to vote, "I don't care if you support Mitt Romney this election. Just vote. Don't take your right to vote for granted."

This election, there are people working hard to stop you from voting, who don't want your voice heard, and most of them are Republicans who are associating voter fraud with racial minority groups. An update on this trend comes from Huffington Post's "Tea Party Poll-Watchers Set Sights on Latino Community," October 25, 2012.

2. I vote DEMOCRAT because I support integration and diversity in government, law, and education. President Barack Obama nominated Berkeley law professor Goodwin Liu to fill a vacancy on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit in 2010, a move applauded by many Asian-American groups. Unfortunately, this overdue promotion was blocked by Republicans who were still smarting over their inability to stop "Wise Latina" Sonia Sotomayor from becoming a U.S. Supreme Court justice in 2009.

This perception that minority professionals cannot be as objective because of their racial and/or rich cultural heritage is not limited to the legal arena, but affects university professors and graduate students as well, whose scholarship may be tainted by accusations of racial and cultural bias that never seem to stick in the reverse direction.

3. I vote DEMOCRAT because I support equal civic membership, equal opportunity, and equal exercise of civil rights for women (as well as for gays and lesbians). As President Barack Obama said on The Tonight Show with Jay Leno (October 24, 2012) in response to yet another Republican blowhard's ignorant remarks, "Rape is rape. It is a crime.... This is exactly why you don't want a bunch of politicians, mostly male, making decisions about women's healthcare decisions."

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For anyone to block a woman's access to birth control and healthcare education comes out of an extremely limited frame of reference; bluntly, it's caveman. A woman's value is not limited to her fallopian tubes and fertilized eggs. No woman should have to hear what an elderly neighbor of mine once said to his wife, "You are good for nothing, because you can't have babies anymore."

4. I vote DEMOCRAT because I live and work in not just the U.S.A., but in the world-at-large. I understand clearly what banker Baron Karl Mayer meant way back in 1875 (as quoted in Nouriel Roubini and Stephen Mihm's book CRISIS ECONOMICS: A CRASH COURSE IN THE FUTURE OF FINANCE, New York: Penguin Press, 2010): "The whole world has become a city."

The U.S. economy is on a healing path. There has been progress under President Obama. It may not be happening as fast as we would like it to, but our fortunes are tied to the world's fortunes, whether we like it or not.

5. I voted for BARACK OBAMA AND JOE BIDEN, because the facts are mostly on our side. Unlike those who would tell you they have the facts but cannot give you any sources, I'm going to give you one way to check the facts: University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg Public Policy Center's www.FactCheck.org.

As I tell students, "Most of us don't have photographic memories. You don't have to know everything. Just know where to find the answers."

Do your own research. Make up your own mind. AND VOTE!

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