🇺🇸 LETTER TO THE EDITOR
MORE POLARIZATION BETWEEN CONSERVATIVES AND LIBERALS: Doesn't this imply one of them has changed opinions?

By Stephen L. Bakke 🇺🇸 May 23, 2015

Here's what provoked me:

A letter writer made a very weak case that conservatives are solely responsible for today's political polarization. I decided to take a little different approach to arriving at a different opinion.

Here's my response:

More Polarization between Conservatives and Liberals:
Doesn't this imply one of them has changed opinions?

Richard Lugar and Edward Montgomery gave us the "Bipartisan Index" to measure bipartisanship of senators and representatives. Then, Mike Tillotson assured us the "index" is unnecessary since conservatives are the sole cause of polarization and dysfunction ("Bipartisanship Index," 5-23).

I'd like to look at this in a different way. Polarization implies changing opinions. I constructed a comparison of the world of my 20s and 30s, with today, as I "linger" in my 60s. Following are some issues that conservatives and liberals argue about:

- Definition of marriage
- Abortion policies
- Voter ID requirements
- Border security enforcement
- Balanced budget
- Expressions of American pride
- Government controlling health care
- Energy independence relying on fossil fuels
- Firearm ownership
- Definition of equality
- Government's role in our lives
- U.S. world leadership

Regarding these issues, I believe positions held in 2014 by conservatives would be very much the mainstream or moderate, even majority, opinions of a generation ago. Yet, liberals accuse conservatives of "moving radically right."

We've had real cultural changes which have led to different perspectives on old issues, and some very new issues. Change isn't bad! Sometimes, even I think conservatives should set aside a traditional belief. When they don't, do I have the right to accuse them of "making a hate filled movement to the radical right"? NO! Because for the most part, they haven't changed! In fact, I think it's the liberals who have changed their opinions the most – thus creating polarization!