

# YOUTH & GOVERNMENT

2010-2011 Advisor Handbook

## Political Ideology Survey

<i>Question</i>	<i>Agree/ Disagree</i>	<i>L/C</i>
1. The federal government places too many restrictions on businesses.		
2. Americans need to be protected from unnecessary police searches and other invasions of privacy.		
3. High taxes discourage people from working hard.		
4. Only people who cannot work should be eligible for welfare programs.		
5. National security is more important than an individual person's right to privacy.		
6. The government should create and pay for programs that help poor people in the United States.		
7. The wealthy should be taxed at a higher percentage than the lower and middle classes.		
8. The best way to help the poor is to help businesses earn a profit and create new jobs.		
9. Government programs on behalf of the disadvantaged discourage people from helping themselves.		
10. The government should not restrict abortion and other reproductive decisions.		
11. The government has a special responsibility to protect minority groups from discrimination.		
12. Crime can be reduced by enforcing stricter penalties and longer jail sentences on criminals.		
13. The government should do more to punish businesses that pollute the environment.		
14. The government should protect Americans from morally offensive films and publications.		
15. The arts should be protected from government censorship. Adults must be free to think and speak as they wish.		
16. Without government regulation, big businesses would take advantage of ordinary Americans.		
17. Crime, unemployment, poverty, and other problems will be reduced if Americans return to the traditional values of hard work, self-discipline, and belief in God.		
18. Our government spends too much on social services and other programs that could be run just as well by businesses, religious organizations, and/or non-profit		

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charity groups.		
19. Homosexuals should receive the same rights and protections as other minority groups.		
20. Policies that create jobs are more important than policies that protect the environment.		
21. The federal government should not get involved in setting academic standards for local public school districts.		
22. Americans have a right to affordable health care.		
23. The death penalty is cruel and unusual punishment.		
24. One way to reduce crime would be to limit the sale and possession of firearms.		
25. The government should allow school-sponsored prayer in the public schools.		

## Quiz: Identifying Ideology

**Directions: Fill in the following blanks with the letter that best describes the statements.**

A. Liberal

B. Conservative

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Our national government should tax less and therefore allow its citizens to decide how best to spend their own money.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. When companies are given more economic freedoms they create more jobs and opportunities for citizens to become prosperous.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Freedom of speech should be protected even if we find that speech offensive.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Parents and students should be given the choice as to what type of schooling is best for their children, even if that choice is a religious school.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Our government has an obligation to provide for all of its citizens basic necessities like food and healthcare.

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5. C                      10. L                      15. L                      20. C                      25. C

4. After the students have coded their responses, ask them to characterize themselves again as “strong liberal,” “moderate liberal,” “moderate,” “moderate conservative,” and “strong conservative,” but this time according to the following scheme.

<b>21-25 Liberal responses</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>Strong Liberal</b>
<b>16-20 Liberal responses</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>Moderate Liberal</b>
<b>21-25 Conservative responses</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>Strong Conservative</b>
<b>16-20 Conservative responses</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>Moderate Conservative</b>
<b>10-15 of either responses</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>Moderate</b>

5. Chart the students’ responses on the board underneath the earlier tally. If there is a change, ask students to theorize about what may have caused the change.
6. Explain to the students that any ideological survey is imperfect in that it is not sophisticated enough to cover the entire gamut of a political belief system, and that they should continue to examine and hone their political beliefs.

## **Evaluation:**

1. Use the attached matching quiz in which students must identify certain statements as liberal or conservative.
2. Ask students to find a newspaper editorial and analyze it for liberal or conservative ideology.
3. Have students write an essay theorizing why some students had a different ideology profile after the survey than before.
4. Ask students to read the following editorials featuring opinions about the right to bear arms guaranteed in the second amendment. (Attached)
  - + *Gun Control isn't Crime Control*
  - + *Smith and Wesson Accepts Gun Safety Pact*
  - + *Janie's Got a Gun*
5. After reading the editorials, ask students to explain how they relate to the second amendment of the constitution. Does the author support the 2<sup>nd</sup> amendment? Does the author feel this amendment needs to be changed? Can you change an amendment?

