

Common Application Personal Statement

Topic #4: Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma-anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.

I am a politically disenfranchised Millennial. I want to believe that my vote matters. I want to believe that politicians are dedicated to public service and intellectualism, and the media is more than another self-interested business pushing its own agenda. However, I do not believe these things. So what is the answer? Am I forced to accept this "reality" or is there some way to make a difference?

In high school, I volunteered for the local chapter of the Republican Party and worked on a few campaigns in the summer. While I met a number of good people, I was disappointed to find that too many activists (both Republicans and Democrats) seemed more interested in winning at all costs than pursuing the greater good. Virtually no matter the weakness of the candidate, once they received their respective party's nomination, the person was seen as a savior and their opponent was cast as the villain with nefarious motives. In addition, both political parties did not seem to have a problem with twisting facts and spinning their answers to win.

My other frustration is that I do not know where I can turn for truth. The current situation with President Donald Trump and the prior presidential election is a good example. I listened to the news and read stories published by major outlets in an effort to educate myself on the issues, but most stories seemed to have a bias and eye catching headline that was not always accurate. I frequently read articles that sounded more like the author was advocating for a position rather than reporting the news. Similarly, I find myself disgusted with both the "spin" coming from the current Republican administration and an intolerant left that says we should be open minded and inclusive, but then only tells one side of the story and vilifies those who do not agree with them.

I wish I could say that I have found the perfect solution, but of course I cannot. And frankly as a teenager with limited life experiences, I am not sure I can even fully comprehend the totality of the problem at this point. Therefore, instead of giving up, I have formulated an initial two-part plan that I hope will lead me in the right direction.

First, I believe in personal action and, therefore, I must ensure my political discourse conforms to the standards that I believe in: honestly, mutual respect, and a commitment to intellectualism. Similarly, I must demand these attributes from candidates that I support regardless of political party. It is true that one person making these types of political choices will not change an election, but at the same time significant change cannot happen without individuals starting with themselves.

Second, I want to use my college experience to immerse myself in the intellectual study of government and politics. While I am sure that I will never fully escape bias, I am hopeful that college will empower me with the time and resources to search out "truth" and pursue learning without being bogged down by some of the daily struggles I will face later in life. I also hope that college will give me an opportunity to "test" and develop my ideas, meet people who see the world differently and have had different experiences, and, in the end, help me figure out the next steps.

I realize that my plan may be simplistic, but I look forward to finding ways to be part of the solution and not give in to accepting our current political "reality."