Side A, Article 1: The Two-Party System

Have you ever heard of the saying, majority rules? Well, this is the nature of the political system in the United States. **Political parties** are organized groups that seek to gain power in the political system. There are three major types of party systems in the world: one-party, two-party and multi-party. The United States has a **two-party system**. This means two major parties dominate the government. Although other parties do exist in the United States, the Democratic and Republican parties dominate the government. In many ways, the two-party system is beneficial for promoting the public good. However, it is also criticized for its disadvantages.

There are four major ways that the two-party system helps promote the public good:
- First, they present readily understandable political information to voters in a convenient manner. By doing so, two-party systems provide order to the political world by representing the broad political philosophy of a party. This helps voters understand the party's views on certain issues. The 2012 Presidential election between Democratic nominee, President Barack Obama, and Republican nominee, former Governor Mitt Romney, provides a good example. During their campaigns, each nominee represented the major political issues of their respective party to the national public.
- Second, two-party systems provide a stable balance by accommodating varied interests and opinions. Since each party consists of organized groups and individual voters, it is necessary to consider a broad range of interests and opinions when making political decisions. In order to receive their continued support, it is best for each party to include its supporters' interests.
- Third, as short-term trends arise, two-party systems discourage sudden shifts in political trends which threaten government stability. If voters disagree with candidates on one political issue, they typically understand that he or she represents the bigger issues of the party. As a result, voters are discouraged from giving up support for the party, and elected officials have more opportunities to focus on long-term public policies. Conversely, a multi-party system can encourage government instability. This is due to many parties sharing power, dissolving or changing coalitions quickly, and having varied interests.
- And fourth, two-party systems encourage political participation. As a democratic and diverse nation, the United States allows U.S. citizens to express different opinions and take part in their own governing by way of the political system. Unlike the one-party system in China where only the Communist Party is permitted to take part in government, the United States allows citizens to participate in government by casting their votes at the polls.

Side A, Article 2: In Defense of the Two Party System
 by: Anand Gupta
http://anandgupta.org/2012/11/22/in-defense-of-the-two-party-system/

America's two-party system works. Blue and red are not false choices dangled in front of middle-class America by a coterie of Washington elites, no matter what the cynics tell you. Ideologies represented by these colors are real, and they paint a system that has consistently delivered results.

Granted, certain screws need to be tightened, such as education, health care, employment and equality. Potential reforms for these issues will require exhaustive debate to implement the most effective policies going forward. But America's two-party system has enabled people across the country to offer innovative solutions and contribute to the decision-making process.

For those of you disappointed with our current political structure, I want to share some lessons from India's experience as a democracy with a multi party system. India has six national political parties and 45 state-level parties, all of which are represented in India's Congress equivalent, the Lok Sabha. In the last major election in 2009, there were candidates from 364 different political parties competing for congressional seats. If no single party wins the majority, which is usually the case, the coalition of parties able to achieve a majority is invited to form the government.

In 2009, the Indian National Congress Party received only 28 percent of the popular vote, but was the undisputed leader of the government coalition. The next major party in the coalition represented less than 4 percent of the entire popular vote. In comparison, at least you as an American voter know your vote will either be in the majority or in the minority, not simply obscured into oblivion.

Further, with a multi party system, it's easier for extremist groups with no progressive agendas to target specific regions with hate-filled narratives. Even small electoral victories for such groups are enough for them to disrupt policy proceedings. This is not just something that has happened in India. Look at the success extreme political parties have had in Turkey, the Balkans, Greece, Scandinavia, Switzerland, Spain and the Netherlands, to name a few. Even with a small fraction of the popular vote, the multi party system has helped amplify their regressive messages.

America attracts the best in the world because it is a nation in which hard work is rewarded. If racist, sexist or anti-immigration parties are allowed to win over even a small voting bloc, this strength will erode and the country will suffer dearly. The rebirth of cults like the Ku Klux Klan would be more than a hypothetical. It also bears emphasizing that lobbying is a legitimate form of communication with the private sector and the political apparatus in Washington; the multi-party system will not inherently quash any such communication channels. If you are frustrated with the slow progress of the politicking in this country right now, you can't imagine the frustration you will endure if we were to adopt a multi party system.

Step back from the hype in the media about the apparent paralysis in American politics. Compare it to what exists elsewhere, and you'll see what you have is far more effective and efficient. There is always going to be room for improvement, and it's clear people like the president are working hard to achieve that improvement.