

Pop the pop culture politics

Bella Ramirez | Editor-in-Chief
pl237961@ahschool.com

With America's intense immersion in all things pop culture, it's no surprise that celebrities and the entertainment industry will have a large hold on how we view politics. However, with an ex-reality television star as President for the past four years, our 2020 election (and politics in general) is getting consumed as entertainment. Although SNL and other late night television shows may profit off this, we need to readjust our perspective on politics if we want real change to occur.

Consider, for example, the proliferation of memes surrounding both candidates' campaigns. Biden's campaign team jumped immediately at the release of Trump's tax returns and sold vinyl buttons for a cheeky \$7.50 that read "I paid more income taxes than Donald Trump." The team is well-known for its humorous merchandise that sells out quickly, like their fly swatters which read "Truth Over Flies" as a jab against the fly that landed on Vice President Mike Pence's head at the Vice President Debate.

On the other end, Trump's campaign exists exclusively in a viral state. While many of the things President Donald Trump says are appalling, to say the least, they allow him to stay in a world of high viewership. With his experience as a reality television show host, he equates this to success. This would be fine if this warped idea of success stuck with only Trump.

"Everything [Donald Trump] does is based on television. So,

the events that he plans, the things that he does, it's all about attention, it's all about publicity. It's all about drawing attention. It's gotten less and less about substance in terms of what he says and what the people want," AP American Government teacher Dr. Jonathan Pedrone said. "I don't think people want to hear about policy anymore. It's just sound bites and clips and, you know, that sort of thing."

Donald Trump has now warped the political field so much that shock factor and viral behavior is equated to success, rather than the professionalism and policy we used to expect from political candidates. The Trump behavior epidemic

is why we received the "Presidential Debate" and have the Biden campaign clout-chasing with viral merchandise.

It's had this adverse effect of people having this different outlook on politics... not as a way of passing policy and making change, but almost as like a game.

Christian Rodriguez, 12, campaign volunteer

The way we now see the election and its candidates in terms of views and retweets completely takes away the validity of our government. The White House should not be determined on how many Twitter followers you have (especially if they are mostly bots). Since this is a democracy, we need to take our power as the people back and give our future candidates a virtual time-out. Rather than paying attention to either of their antics, we should only give attention to policy. Without granting the attention that politicians desperately need to even get elected, we should only get candidates who take their job seriously. This isn't to say politicians need to stop having personality, we just need to make sure that personality does not block actual work from getting done.



CAMERA READY: President Donald Trump speaks to a crowd at the White House Christmas tree lighting ceremony. A former reality TV star, Trump is no stranger to the cameras. (Photo/Joyce N. Boghosian via Wikimedia Commons)

(Graphic/Ella Gohari)
(Photos/Biden Victory Fund)

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