

incomplete coverage of the aforementioned areas may make it inappropriate for more advanced researchers, this book is recommended for public libraries and undergraduate collections.—*Seth Kershner, Public Services Librarian, Northwestern Connecticut Community College, Winsted, Connecticut*

Today's Economic Issues: Democrats and Republicans.

Edited by Nancy S. Lind, Erik T. Rankin, and Gardenia Harris. *Across the Aisle*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2016. 387 pages. Acid free \$97 (ISBN 978-1-4408-3926-8). E-book available (978-1-4408-3937-5), call for pricing. ***Today's Social Issues: Democrats and Republicans.*** Timothy W. Kneeland. *Across the Aisle*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2016. 388 pages. Acid free \$97 (ISBN 978-1-61069-835-1). E-book available (978-1-61069-836-8), call for pricing.

Here I get the unique pleasure of reviewing two separate books in one shot. They are the first two volumes in ABC-CLIO's *Across the Aisle* series, examining contemporary economic and social issues from the perspectives of America's two most prominent and increasingly polarized political parties. Both volumes adhere to the same format and structure, and entries are comparable in quality and depth, the only difference being that *Today's Economic Issues* contains a forward and introduction, whereas *Social Issues* has only a brief introduction. The former is an edited volume, whereas the latter is authored solely by Kneeland. As for the main content, the publisher is clearly going for uniformity throughout the series, so with my sincere apologies to the unique contributions of the authors and editors, I will for the most part be reviewing the two books together.

Alphabetical entries (totaling thirty-eight and thirty-seven, respectively) cover a wide range of issues such as "Financial Industry Regulation," "Minimum Wage," "LGBT Rights," and "Religious Freedom." All begin with an introductory "At a Glance" paragraph or two, then in short order, bullet-point out a couple of the broad, party-defining differences between how the Democrats and Republicans tend to view the issues. Then comes an overview that tracks the issue from its roots

to the present. This kicks off what is essentially a literature review, leading then into subsequent sections, examining the issue as seen and addressed by each party over the years. These sections also include a brief case study (usually two) to highlight a specific piece of legislation (or proposed legislation), speech or article excerpt, party platform stance, event, etc. to provide additional insight. One additional thing worth noting is that many of the sections make clear that neither party is wholly unified or monolithic regarding these issues, which is good because it would be disingenuous and oversimplifying to paint every party member with the same brushstroke for each.

The issues in these volumes have been explored ad nauseam in (I'm generalizing here) scores of reference books in recent years. They are, after all, "hot button" issues to which undergraduate students tend to flock when writing that quintessential expository writing paper early on in their college career. However, the only other reference that really explores the divergent philosophies of the two parties on various issues, albeit not side-by-side like the current title, are *The Encyclopedia of the Republican Party* and *The Encyclopedia of the Democratic Party* (two volumes each) published in 1996, followed by 2001 supplement (Sharpe Reference). These do a good job at outlining party stances in their "Issues and Ideologies" sections, but are by virtue of their publication date, très passé and would be inadequate for researching the contemporary state of affairs. Although not technically "reference," the *Opposing Viewpoints* series recently dedicated two volumes to *The Democratic Party* and *The Republican Party*, which also hash out some of the major social and economic issues from the party-specific standpoints (Greenhaven 2015).

The books being reviewed here are unique and timely. They are definitely written for a general audience of high school through undergraduate level students. I would (and will) gladly add them to my library's collection, but probably place them right in the main stacks as opposed to the ever-shrinking print reference area.—*Todd J. Wiebe, Head of Research and Instruction, Van Wylen Library, Hope College, Holland, Michigan*