

Presidential Candidate Tulsi Gabbard With UVU Students



Presidential candidate Tulsi Gabbard speaks at Utah Valley University

On January 21st, 2020 Hawaiian Representative, Tulsi Gabbard, visited Utah Valley University (UVU) and answered the concerns of the students. She began the lecture by describing why she would make a good President and how her ambitions differ from not only President Trump, but the other democratic candidates in the race as well. Gabbard is a veteran which was evidently appreciated by many of the students who asked her questions.

It was interesting to see how her pitch differed from Mayor Pete Buttigieg's on Monday night. Something that I took away from his rally was how clear and concise he was with his answers and plans for America. He offered numbers and procedures outlining how he planned to solve some of America's most pressing issues like healthcare. If I had not seen Mayor Buttigieg just a few days earlier, I probably would have been very impressed with Gabbard's performance. However, I felt like her opening was very vague. She spent a lot of time talking about polarized politics and how the media is perpetuating this issue. While I do agree that politics in the US is dangerously polarized, I did not appreciate her using her limited time to explain how putting a moderate candidate in the White House would be beneficial. These are conclusions that many of us--especially in Utah--can draw ourselves. US Senator Mitt Romney demonstrated how a lot of Utah citizens feel regarding the current administration when he voted guilty on the first article of

impeachment of the President Trump. Utah is not a state that finds US Senator Bernie Sanders tempting, and because of this I felt like Tulsi Gabbard's pitch was ill fitting to the audience and more of a "one size fits all" speech.



Utah Valley University students ask questions Presidential candidate Tulsi Gabbard t

While I clearly did not approve of her opening message, I thought that through questions she would be able to voice her policies and plan of action for the concerns raised by the students. The first student in audience thanked her for her service and then proceeded to ask what she will do if elected president to make sure that the country's second amendment right is not violated or taken away. While I found the question to be a little bold to ask a democratic candidate, I was more so disappointed in her response. Rather than giving a clear statement on how she feels about gun control, she avoided the question by spending a large chunk of time explaining how important mediation and discussion would be in the process of gun control reform. She did not mention anything about mental health or weapon bans. She clearly knew that she was presenting to a pro-

gun state and wanted to appeal to the majority. However, as someone with neutral opinions on gun control, I found her lack of conviction to be unappealing.

One area she did thrive in discussing was foreign affairs. The following question was whether she approved of Trump's decision to take out Iranian General Soleimani. To this she had clear responses and opinions on the issue. As other issues regarding foreign affairs came up, she maintained the same demeanor and it gained my respect.

When comparing my encounters with the two candidates, Buttigieg clearly won me over. However, it is a lot easier to state your plans for America when you are delivering them to a crowd of people who waited in line for an hour to meet you.

Presenting to college campus in a red state as a democrat would probably change my rhetoric if I was in her shoes as well. However, as evident by Sanders winning Utah, clear conviction and passionate plans makes for an electable candidate.

Miriam Funk, UVU student