

Attending Presidential Candidate Tulsi Gabbard Event



On February 21, 2020, Tulsi Gabbard, Hawaii Congresswoman and Democratic Presidential Candidate visited Utah Valley University (UVU) to discuss the various issues that her campaign focuses on. She was hosted by the History and Political Science Department of UVU. She took the time to answer questions from students and took time afterward to meet with students as well.

First off, it was really interesting when she started off talking about the media influence in politics. Because what is being said in the media can carry a lot of weight, it does have an effect on current issues. She views it in terms of what people find important going on in politics against what the media does, but this can also be true in terms of how leaders view issues versus what the media says. For example, if two countries are trying to get a peace treaty done but it's getting presented in the media in a very negative way, it can hamper one side or both sides ability to work because of how their perception is back home. Another thing that she brought up that was

interesting is about having healthy dialogue with the people you work with. I would imagine that being an elected official in the national government would have similar dynamics to working as a diplomat. It was interesting to hear her talk about building relationships with her colleagues, which is really important when trying to get the things you want to accomplish done. Not sure if every situation is going to be perfect for free toffee sent to their offices but making inroads with the people you work with can make negotiations much easier. Also, focusing on the importance of compromise is really important when working in diplomacy.

What I thought was one of the most important things brought up during her talk was when she was asked about whether the assassination of Qasem Soleimani made us safer as a nation. Now, those that are familiar with Tulsi Gabbard's politics (myself in the know) have heard her talk about the consequences of regime change wars. With that, I wasn't surprised to hear her say that killing Soleimani is counterproductive to finding peace, but it's still a really important thing to talk about. When you take certain military actions like killing another government official or toppling another government, what does that actually do for you? How does going to war benefit you and the region? When you talk about going to war for whatever reason, you have to look at the consequences of that decision. This gets followed up on when she brings up using diplomacy to prevent war. Being able to deescalate situations and having conversations with other countries we don't agree with to make sure that war is prevented is really important to the function of a state. This also is much more sustainable than being in a constant state of war.

So overall, I thought that this was pretty good. It's not every day you get to go hear from somebody running for president on your campus, especially when you have someone who distances themselves from the D.C establishment and has something thoughtful to say. As someone who has been paying attention to this presidential race, I have always considered her one of the best people in the race. Although my top spot never changed and I have disagreed on some of her opinions, I respect her courage and honesty in standing up for people and not being afraid of the fight.

Jake Lamoreaux, UVU student