The two party system has dominated American politics since our country first broke from Great Britain in 1776. In the time since then, some parties have changed names, several new ones have rose to prominence, and others have faded into obscurity. For all the strengths this system provides, it has at least one fatal flaw: attempting to sort an incredibly diverse nation now numbering well over 300 million people into one of two bins: Democrat or Republican.

The Independents Caucus is an attempt to break down this binary structure where it exists in the Cornell Political Union. We are a group for those who don’t fit neatly into either bin, left nor right. We’re also a group for those who recognize that both the political left and the political right have great value to add to our discussions, but that neither has a monopoly on understanding the world, or how to improve it.

Our caucus is meant to be a place for those who hold a mix of beliefs from both the left and the right. We believe in the value of economic markets, but also their fallibility. We understand the necessity of governmental intervention in the economy, but also its potentially dangerous unintended consequences. We see markets and incentives as starting points and potentially useful tools in solving the world’s biggest problems today, not either as ends of themselves nor an evil to be fought.

We also believe vehemently in the ideals of limited government, accountability, and the rule of law, and believe these standards should be applied equally regardless of which party may be under scrutiny at the current time. We strongly believe in the value of the separation of powers, and lament the recent decline of congressional power. We see grave danger in the recent trend among presidents of each party towards ruling by executive order rather than congressional compromise.

We also stand strongly for free and fair elections. We strongly oppose partisan gerrymandering regardless of the political party it benefits. Similarly, we firmly believe every eligible citizen should be able to vote, and support efforts to involve more people in the political process. We also support new voting initiatives throughout the nation that ensure the people’s voice is more accurately represented by their elected officials.

Finally and perhaps most importantly, we believe in the value of free thought and spirited but respectful debate. We stand against partisan tribalism and the belief that either the red team or the blue team has a monopoly on truth or understanding about the world. We believe that the vast majority of Americans with a wide variety of political backgrounds are operating in good faith, and work hard to reach a middle-ground solution even when we don’t see entirely

eye-to-eye.