

Presidential Candidate Tulsi Gabbard speaks to Utah Valley University Students



(L to R): Jeff Hibbard, UVU student, U.S. Representative Tulsi Gabbard, and Megan Davis, UVU student

On February 21st, 2020, Tulsi Gabbard, U.S. House Representative for Hawaii's 2nd congressional district and Democratic presidential candidate for the 2020 election, spoke to Utah Valley University (UVU) political science students. Representative Gabbard, a member of the Hawaii Army National Guard, served in a medical field unit in Iraq from 2004-2005 and then from 2008-2009 she was deployed to Kuwait as Army Military Police platoon leader. She was elected to the United States House of Representatives in 2012.

In the beginning of her presentation, Representative Tulsi Gabbard talked about some of her ideals and thoughts on the biggest problems we are facing in America today. She stated, "The biggest problem in America isn't left vs right or capitalism vs socialism. The problem is the powerful elite politicians in D.C. have forgotten who they work for. Politicians need to check their partisan politics at the door and be ready to serve their country and fellow Americans." Mrs. Gabbard went on to express her views and opinions

about topics like impeachment, partisanship, the 2nd amendment, and healthcare. At the conclusion of her presentation, she opened it up to the audience to ask questions.



Presidential candidate Tulsi Gabbard during the meeting with UVU students

One of the students asked Tulsi Gabbard opinion on how we can change the culture of the partisanship divide and change it to a culture of compromise. As a reply, Representative Gabbard quoted Abraham Lincoln that, “a house divided against itself cannot stand.” She then shared a personal story of what she did to try and break the partisan barriers in the U.S. House of Representatives. When Mrs. Tulsi Gabbard was first elected she had her mother make 434 boxes of macadamia nut toffee for every member of U.S. Congress and another 434 boxes for their staff members and families. Along with the boxes of toffee she gave handwritten notes introducing herself to the members of the U.S. Congress. She called this her *gifts of aloha*. This helped her build relationships with other members of U.S. Congress not only in her party and she broke

through the seemingly impossible partisan barriers. Bipartisanship happened when she introduced new legislation because of these early relationships she built.

On behalf of UVU political science students, I would personally like to thank the chair of our department, Jay DeSart, and the faculty host of the event, Sam Rhodes for arranging such a unique opportunity for UVU students to hear from and mingle with a U.S. Congresswoman and a presidential candidate. There are so many amazing opportunities at UVU because of the Engaged Learning model and phenomenal staff and faculty members.

Megan Davis, UVU student