

Can a Mock Election Decide the Real Thing?

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CAMPAGINING AT THE HILL Large flyers promoting the Democratic Party were organized into the word “Vote” in the 200s. Photo by Jinu Jung (‘28)

With the 2024 Presidential Election approaching, the AP Government class has created a mock election to teach students about politics and allow them to engage with the electoral process firsthand.

Two students from AP Government, Arya Sharma (‘25) and Angelo Carella (‘25) represent Kamala Harris and Donald Trump respectively. To make the election even more realistic, the students mimic their policies and attend mock events inspired by the actual electoral process.

The first event was a town hall hosted on October 10th, where the candidates, along with Westhill students, gathered in the Barbara Jackson Little Theater. The students were given an opportunity to ask questions directly to the candidates and engage in the discussions.

“We stand for America that is united, that is sovereign from other nations, and that is strong and is a leader in our world’s economy, military, and technological forces,” Angelo Carella (‘25), who represents the Republican party, said.

“My policies range on so many different topics, you’ll hear a lot of them today. I’m gonna talk about the economy, my plans for the economy, I’m gonna talk about healthcare, school, my plan for education, and so on,” Arya Sharma (‘25), representing Kamala Harris, said.

Both the Republican and Democratic party expressed their vision for America,

though their priorities and the way they reach that vision sharply differ.

Carella, the Republican candidate, emphasized national unity, improvements in the military, developments in the economy and in technology sectors and advocated for a strong, more self-sufficient and united America.

In contrast, Sharma’s statement touched more on policies regarding healthcare, the economy, and changes in the education department. Her approach puts more focus on lowering inequality, dealing with social issues, and improving public services.

The diverse policies and spread of opinions allow voters to assess the candidates over a wide variety of different issues.

“My plan is to speak my opinion, give the people to come in and listen to what I have to say, let them know that we are really trying to improve America, and when they realize that we are trying, the votes will come in naturally,” Carella (‘25) said. He believes that students should vote for his party because he is “an advocate for a strong America.”

“America is leaning away from the international superpower like it used to be, and now we need to reel it back in.”

Sharma and Carella also gave their opinions on how easy or difficult it is going to be to win the election. “I think that it’s gonna be a 50/50 fight but I think I can prevail at the end of the day,” Carella (‘25) said. “I think he’s a tricky target,” says Arya Sharma (‘25) representing Kamala Harris. Both candidates

are confident in their skills but understand that their opponent is no easy challenger.

Moving away from what they think about their opponents, The Westword asked the candidates about their biggest strengths.

“I think my biggest strength is my foreign policy, my ability to get nations to sit down together and come up for an agreement and push together for a motive and for a cause that is greater than themselves,” Carella said. Meanwhile, Sharma asserts that her biggest strength “is that I resonate with the people. They understand me, they understand my intentions, and I think that they really appreciate that.”

In addition to speaking with the candidates, The Westword asked the AP Gov teacher, Mrs. Sheryl Berkeley, to explain her thoughts on how well-prepared the candidates are for the election. “I think they are very prepared and have done a lot of work to ensure that they are. They’ve done a lot of research online, they additionally have done a lot of work with regards to ensuring that the policies that they are presenting are accurate as to what the candidates would want to say themselves,” says Mrs. Berkley.

Potential voters still have another opportunity to see and assess the candidates on October 29th for a high-stakes debate. Though it’s still too early to make any predictions, one thing is for certain, that it will be a very tight and competitive race. Just remember to cast a vote and make your voice heard.