

## Artists and Their Political Views

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Today, many young people feel strongly about and enthusiastically support their favorite artists (singers, actors, bloggers, etc.). But everyone has a different understanding of what it means to be a true fan. For some, supporting favorite singers means simply listening to their songs and attending concerts; for others, it is important to defend an artist in online arguments; for another group, it is also about investing in the artist financially (buying merchandise, CDs, and so on); and for some, it means sharing a singer's worldview, including the artist's beliefs and values. Many teens see their favorite artists as role models. As a consequence, artists have a huge power to shape supporters' political opinions. For example, Taylor Swift endorsed Kamala Harris in the US 2024 presidential election. Some of her devoted fans found this reason enough to vote for the Democratic candidate.

But should artists really use their public platforms to express their political opinions? Some argue that artists should use their power in the media to draw people's attention to some of the problems of contemporary society: racism, inequality, environmental issues, etc. The authorities cannot simply ignore their comments, as they have significant influence and may encourage people to protest. In fact, artists can use their art to express ideas, which has the potential to provoke a stronger public response than simple political declarations. Artists can also motivate their young fans to participate in politics. A lot of teenagers do not follow politicians on social media, but they follow the artists they idolize and accept their views on political issues. Finally, artists who speak out about political issues show others that they do not live in their own imaginary world. They are citizens of a certain country and they are aware of its current problems. Being a citizen means to understand and fulfill not only legal but also moral responsibilities.

Others argue that politics is a serious matter and we should let only experts do and speak about it. Artists have a powerful platform due to their creative talents, but their knowledge and understanding of a political issue might be superficial. As we all do, they could also say or post something impulsively, out of emotion, without checking facts first. In addition to that, artists could be acting out of self-interest — they can be paid to support certain candidates or express certain views. They might also speak on important issues only because they are seeking people's attention. Moreover, sometimes artists' statements, even if they are made with good intentions, could harm politicians' reputations or lead to the spread of misinformation. In this regard, they could be responsible for shaping the image of political figures or groups. Finally, expressing their political opinions might end up polarizing the artist's fan community and trigger strong political reactions. Some say that music and art should unite and not divide us.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. What does it mean to be a “true fan?” Does this imply solidarity with an artist’s political views?
2. Do artists have a moral responsibility to speak out on political issues, or to remain silent? Are there ethical conditions that require artists to speak out and conditions that require them to refrain from public statements?
3. Who should we listen to when making a political decision?