Filibustering the Filibuster: A Reexamination of the Legislative Role in Establishing a Fair Judiciary

Adam H. Reiser (Susan Olson)
Department of Political Science

The separation of power is a fundamental characteristic of U.S. government. However, the mechanics of this separation are tested often, particularly in areas where branches of government directly collide. One such area is the judicial confirmation process, where the Senate, a body of the legislative branch, is charged with confirming or rejecting an executive's appointment to the judicial branch. While the judicial confirmation process has always been affected by political ideology, the use of filibusters to halt judicial nominations has been practiced with more regularity in recent years. My research scrutinizes the current state of the judicial confirmation process and the appropriate role of the Senate filibuster. I conclude that the use of Senate filibusters to halt judicial nominations is not in the best interest of American government. I also propose a 60 vote standard for confirming federal judicial nominations.

The Religious Divide Honors Think Tank

Ginger Dobie, Homayoun Hejazi, Devan Hite, Jacob Madsen, Erin Reed, Christopher Sanchez, Kathleen Tedford, Matt Weinstock, Brock Worthen (Rev. France A. Davis)

The University of Utah Honors Program ThinkTank is a two-semester experiential program that gives a group of Honors students from various majors an opportunity to work collaboratively on a contemporary societal challenge under the guidance of a faculty mentor. The theme for this specific Think Tank was the religious divide in Salt Lake City. The team decided to take a unique approach to this issue by trying to shed some light on various religious conflicts within the greater Salt Lake community through the eyes of the community's youth; a group that is often overlooked when attempting to analyze these types of issues. The goal of the project was twofold: attempting to define the many facets of the divide through the experiences of the youth, and presenting opportunities for constructive dialogue between youth from various faith groups to further probe the issue of the divide.