



POLITICAL INFLUENCE-GOOD OR BAD?

Kathlyn Q. Barrozo
Class of 1991, University of Santo Tomas
B.S. Medical Technology

We equate influence with power. It is quite accurate to do that since influence can be seen as a manner by which we are able to change what is status quo.

Political clout allows those in power to create either huge or diminutive changes to the world. When you are in a position of power, you are afforded a status not usually enjoyed by those on the opposite side of your spectrum. When a politician gets in line, the queue ceases to exist because that politician is ushered to the head of the line. Very few, if any, politicians would gladly and patiently wait in a line of people to get something stamped, approved or checked. Fewer still are politicians whose willingness to be considered just one among the multitudes supersedes their desire to be considered one of the elite. When one is in a position of power, time is a problem that is not theirs and waiting is a chore reserved only for the layman. Influence is automatically a given because a politician gets things done faster, easier and more readily. Simply put, political influence puts one on a higher plane.

But there are those unassuming officials who do not consider their positions as a way of getting things done as they prefer. There are the rare ones who look at political influence as a way by which they can help their constituents get better treatment or greater notice. And these kinds of people do not stop at just affixing their signatures to endorsement letters; they do follow-ups patiently and aggressively while taking care not to overstep any boundaries or not to put others at a disadvantage. These politicians consider their posts as blessings for the greater good to prosper, where the welfare of their fellowmen comes as an honest priority. The poor, the marginalized, the defenseless in society can approach them freely because their doors are always open for such sectors. What's even nobler is when these politicians do not impose their will on those they extend assistance to by asking such help seekers to vote for them. For this breed of politicians, their position is a means to be of service. They do not find cheap thrill in being recognized for their deeds because for them, the rewards are always greater when something proceeds from the heart. It is not simply because they are in a position to do anything but rather because they are in a position to spread the goodness to those they serve.

Let us pray for politicians and government officials who look at their influence as a means to reach more people, and not as a means to enrich themselves and gain fame and hallow glory.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. If you were a politician in government, how would you use your influence?
2. Why is it not easy to balance influence with humility and a sincere desire to help others?
3. Are there any government officials in your country that you admire for the kind of influence they exert? Be able to talk about such people.
4. What is your opinion on entertainment celebrities getting into politics?
5. How would you want to influence the world?