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# THE 13<sup>TH</sup> PRESIDENT MILLARD FILLMORE'S POLITICAL PLATFORM

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## SOCIAL ISSUES

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During his first presidency, a large number of President Millard Fillmore's changes to the United States' social climate revolved around issues of slavery. Fillmore actually did not run for office with a platform; he became president after President Zachary Taylor (the 12<sup>th</sup> president) died of cholera. President Taylor ran as a "No-Platform Candidate" relying upon his popularity as a war hero to win his presidency rather than any political facts or beliefs ("American President: A Reference Resource"). Therefore, Fillmore did not have any pre-conceived platform that he needed to abide by or reject after election. Once gaining his presidency, Fillmore's social policies both diminished slavery in the West while aiding slavery in the South. For instance, he passed a compromise that entered California into the union as a free state; however, he also passed the Compromise of 1850, which included the Fugitive Slave Act that restricted individuals from helping runaway slaves and allowing runaway slaves to be re-enslaved ("American President: A Reference Resource"). The reason why Fillmore supported both of these changes was to appease both the anti-slavery North and the pro-slavery South. He was attempting to stop the Civil War, which would eventually rock the nation. In the end, Fillmore's social position was to appease various viewpoints so that the US could remain peaceful.

Therefore, in today's climate, Fillmore would most likely take a middle road position on domestic social policies that would appease people based upon their state's majority opinion. By placing more power in the hands of the state government, rather than the federal, hot topic debates ranging from abortion to drug legalization to gay rights to racial profiling will be decided by those who are directly affected by the outcomes. Fillmore believes that those living in New Mexico need different laws than those living in New York. Fillmore believes that state governments know their people better than federal governments. Fillmore knows that by putting more power in the hands of the people, the United States government will be able to better serve its citizens. Therefore, Fillmore may not have specific opinions in these social matters; however, his opinions aren't what matter. What matters are the opinions of Americans.

*American President: A Reference Resource*. Miller Center, 2013. Web. 5 2014.  
<<http://millercenter.org/president/fillmore/essays/biography/4>>.<sup>4</sup>

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## NOTES

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- Students will need to complete a platform section for FIVE of the following policies: Economic, Educational, Environmental, Foreign, Health Care, Social, and/or War. If there is another platform section your group would like to complete in place of one of the listed options, please run the idea by Mr. Walters first.
- Full Structure should include: 1) Topic Sentence, 2) Proof #1, 3) Analysis, 4) Proof #2, 5) Analysis, and 6) Wrap-up. This will result in complex paragraphs ranging from 8 to 14 sentences.
- The information should be thorough including terms and their relative explanations.
- Proofs should be followed by in-text citations.
- Use transition words like "therefore," "once," "for instance," "in the end," etc.
- Include a work cited information at the end of each section
- Format the document in a formal and professional manner
- Include clear uses of rhetorical modes and rhetorical devices and one logical fallacy. Label them for clarity.