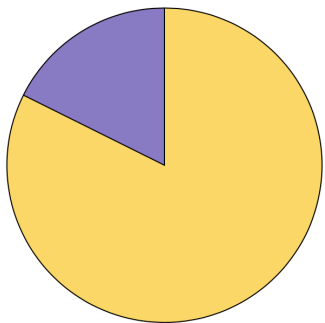


## What's Your Opinion?

Would you ever seriously consider voting for a third party candidate in a presidential election?

Out of 68 responses:  
I would -- 56  
I wouldn't -- 12



● I would ● I wouldn't

## Next Poll:

**Early Bird or Night Owl**  
Are you more of a morning person or night person?

Students can answer the poll on The Herald's Instagram page, [@astateherald](#). Instagram polls are posted on Mondays. Previous poll results can be found on [astatetheherald.com](#). Have an idea for a poll? Send your ideas to [heraldopinion1921@gmail.com](mailto:heraldopinion1921@gmail.com).

These and future articles can be found on the Opinion section of The Herald's website.

# We need more options in this election

WILL LIVINGSTON

STAFF WRITER



Will Livingston is a junior creative media production major from Hot Springs.

As we near election day, many Americans feel that instead of picking the best candidate, they are choosing the lesser of two evils and it's not hard to see why.

On one side, we have a man under multiple criminal investigations who is the most impeached president in American history. On the other side, we have a man whose time in office has seen the cost of living increase nearly 20% since 2021, and in the opinion of 86% of Americans, is too old to be running the country.

According to a survey from Reuters, about 70% of Americans believe Joe Biden, the incumbent candidate for the Democrats, should not seek re-election.

About 56% of Americans do not want Donald Trump, the Republican candidate and former president, to run again.

Now, more than ever, Americans should seek other options for president. If Americans want to stop holding their breath every time they go to the polls, they should feel that a vote for a third party is not a wasted vote.

We can only make this a reality by seriously considering these candidates and including them in the national conversations during elections so that the stigma around them is removed from the equation.

Third-party candidates are beneficial to all elections, as they can provide an option for voters who feel the mainstream parties do not represent their interests.

For example, independent Senator Bernie Sanders has been the senior senator for Vermont, a solidly Democratic-leaning state, since 2006. While sharing many values with the Democrat platform, Sanders's own socialist leanings align more with what Vermont voters want, so Sanders is a popular option for them.

In 1998, Minnesota, also a blue state, elected 'Reform Party' candidate Jesse Ventura in an upset over the main parties. Ventura's stances on education

reform and cannabis legalization better met the desires of voters on both sides of the aisle.

But third-party candidates can also appeal to Republican voters as well.

In the 1992 election, many Republican voters who did not approve of George H.W. Bush's domestic policies decided to vote for 'Reform Party' candidate Ross Perot, whose focus on economic growth and efficiency was attractive to many Republicans. This took votes away from Bush and led to a victory for Democratic candidate Bill Clinton.

In this election, there is a third-party candidate who has been drawing a lot of attention. Robert F. Kennedy Jr., candidate for the 'We The People Party', has gained a substantial following and according to Politico, is polling at 22% of voters in a hypothetical race against Trump and Biden.

While he may not be the answer we are looking for, his success to this point proves that many Americans are

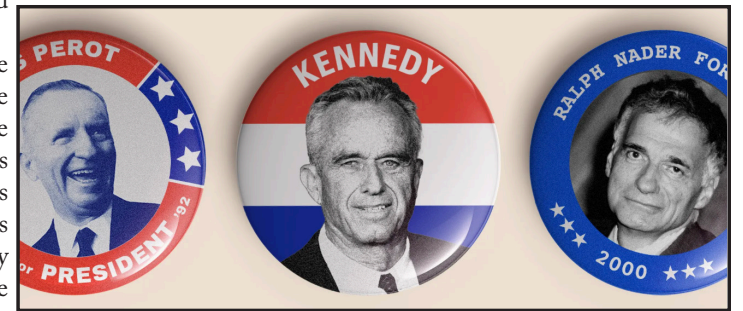
fed up with the limited options available and are hungry for more.

Democratic voters have become upset with President Biden due to the increased cost of living and the continued funding of wars in the Middle East and Ukraine using American tax dollars that they feel should be going toward American benefits.

On the other side, many Republican voters are frustrated with the antics of former President Trump.

Americans have been presented a choice between two candidates, but neither Joe Biden nor Donald Trump are fit to be president.

A third-party candidate would better represent the actual interests of the American people and create competition so that the best candidate, no matter the party, can win.



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF MOTHER JONES  
Three prominent third party presidential candidates: Ross Perot, Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and Ralph Nader.

# Irony is poisoning us

ELIJAH TEMPLETON

OPINION EDITOR



Elijah Templeton is a junior English major from Jonesboro.

"Irony poisoning" was a term coined about a decade ago to describe the rise of irony and its influence on popular culture and society as a whole to an alarmingly negative degree.

This was exemplified by the rise of cynicism and self-deprecating humor breaching into every corner of society, making us more jaded and cruel as a result.

Once upon a time, irony was used as a tool to reveal the dark sides of culture and call out hypocrisy and corruption. It is now difficult to distinguish between true sincerity and the self-aware, tongue-in-cheek variety.

This change, according to famed American writer David Foster Wallace,

came about as a result of changing television in the '60s.

Wallace wrote that television was to blame for adopting a self-deprecating and ironic attitude to make their viewers feel smarter than the rest of the public, to "flatter them into continuing to watch." This attitude bled into other art forms and eventually into society as a whole, becoming the often accepted default setting.

This reality negatively affects us by fostering a pessimistic attitude and shaming many sentimental moments for being "weird" or "cringey."

Wallace wrote that people are so frightened by the possibility of being labeled naive that they will use irony as a sort of shield to defend against that possibility, not allowing themselves to think any other way.

Movies will make jokes that wink at the audience as if to say "We know we are being cringe and silly, but since we know that too, it's okay for you to laugh."

This poisoning stretches far beyond popular culture though, as it has embedded itself

into the very foundation of our society.

It was once viewed as a wholly positive thing to have an optimistic outlook for the future. Now, through a combination of changing economics and irony-infused culture, it is much more acceptable to be nihilistic and accept the 'reality' that nothing will get any better.

Where sincerity and thoughtfulness once were, aloofness and emotional distance have taken root, ensuring that many young people, the primary creators and consumers of new cultural movements, will adopt this mindset and infuse it into their world, further continuing the cycle.

It has gotten so bad that some people online must clarify they are enjoying things ironically. They are traveling to certain places as a joke. They don't actually think this thing is good, but they are simply 'in' on the joke and are

playing along for everyone else's benefit.

Wallace mused that a new generation of artists and thinkers would rebel against this philosophy. He thought that in the same way that irony and pessimism had taken over the bright optimism that came before, youthful exuberance and light would create a counter-cultural movement that would drive out the nihilistic darkness.

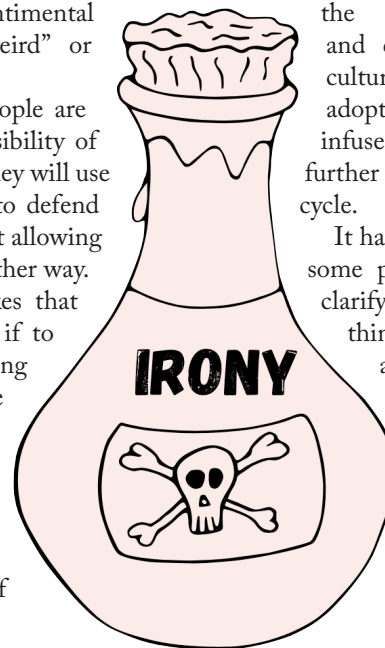
It has been almost thirty years since then and irony still holds a firm place in our culture and society. If it is not properly addressed, it may go past the point of no return.

By allowing ourselves to be intimate and vulnerable, we actively work to remove the stigma around these real human traits. If artists can be unapologetically sincere and hopeful, then consumers may absorb that thinking in the same way we have absorbed the worst parts of irony up to this point.

It is not uncool to be vulnerable and it is not naive to hope for a better tomorrow, no matter what the world tells you.

But of course, that's just one man's opinion.

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