

Chappell Roan's Call for Progress

By: Abigail Prudlow

Chappell Roan, singer and recent winner of Best New Artist at the VMAs, has recently come under fire for an interview with *The Guardian* on September 20 concerning the 2024 Presidential Election. In this interview, Roan boldly states that she will not be endorsing Kamala Harris, reasoning that there are “problems on both sides.”

To many this statement set off alarm bells, causing backlash and confusion towards the artist's comments. Many viewed the statement as the equivalent to encouraging others not to vote, or worse, vote for the alternative candidate.

But are Roan's comments really something to drag her over the coals for? My answer is no.

Anyone who has been following the skyrocketing career of Roan has no doubt heard about two of her most prominent political views: transgender rights and a ceasefire in Palestine, two issues that the Democratic party has more recently fractured over.

For transgender rights, stances on issues relating to the availability of gender affirming care and participation of transgender athletes in athletics has been wobbly throughout the party to say the least. And for the bloodshed in Palestine, it is hard to find an issue that has become more divisive. The continued support that the United States has shown for the state of Israel even in the face of countless atrocities weighs down voters' enthusiasm.

What Roan means by her lack of endorsement, and what she clarifies in a video posted after the release of the September 20 interview, is that her endorsement and her vote are two entirely separate things “because actions speak louder than words.” She conveys her hatred toward policies on the right (as it is clear that those policies leave neither the transgender community nor the Palestinian community in any better of a position) but also admits that she cannot show a full statement of support for Harris “because there is no way that I can stand behind some of the left's completely transphobic and completely genocidal views.”

Roan argues that what we need to do is not abstain from voting for candidates that we know are better for society but to pressure those who fall short. The political parties of the United States are supposed to serve the needs and the wants of the people, and to accept the stances that are taken by the mainstream to the point of endorsing a candidate whose policies you do not fully support is an acceptance of those short-comings.

The backlash that Roan has received for these comments show an unwillingness to listen fully to what it is she is trying to say. Politicians and policies are meant to be questioned in a democracy and that is what she is calling for. A lack of endorsement, and a statement encouraging one to look at both sides is not an attempt to toe the middle, or an uneducated statement about the negative impacts of voting for the right on certain key issues, but instead a sign that one is participating fully in our government and trying to make progress in our system.

Sources:

Chappell Roan via Instagram and The Guardian