

# Democrats & Republicans Don't Care Much About Each Other's Physical Distress

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## *Discover Magazine:*

As we descend into another election year, it would be nice if we could remember that people across the political divide are, er, people too. Unfortunately, that's harder than it sounds, according to a new study in *Psychological Science*. Democrats and Republicans both are less likely to empathize with people from the opposite end of the political spectrum.

Psychologists know that empathy is often dependent on similarity. It's easier, for example, to empathize with Jack London's characters when you're reading about Yukon explorers at a snowy bus stop than on the beach in Cancun. The researchers devised a clever experiment where students at a Michigan bus stop in January were asked to do a "reading comprehension" test. The short story they read, about a hiker who gets lost without clothes, food, or water, also inserted some clues to the hiker's political affiliations.

Read the whole story: [Discover Magazine](#)