**Jessica Thayer** (00:00): My name is Jessica Thayer. I'm a senior studying law [inaudible 00:00:05] philosophy at Frostburg State University. I'm the vice president of the student government association and the founder and president of our university debate team.

**Jessica Thayer** (00:14): I think sometimes the greatest amount of change can literally lie at the community level, starting with having a conversation with your neighbor and reaching out to other people in your community who are in need or who have a difference of opinion than you. And we've been unable to do that because the rate of polarization has sort of made us segregate into our camps. It's so easy to just hang around people who agree with you or find a news outlet that will tell you exactly what you want to hear. That's a major, major problem.

**Jessica Thayer** (00:52): I think that with the most recent election, I am hopeful that we can start to move away from polarization and find a more moderate lane because at the end of the day the differences are really not that huge and political parties are not the end all be all. American people have a lot in common and it's pointless to try and divide ourselves into camps and be divisive because nothing will ever get done.

**Jessica Thayer** (01:21): So I am really, really hopeful. And I think with the uptick in young voters and activism, I think we're seeing a lot of issues come to the forefront and the quicker that those things get addressed the more prosperous nation that we're going to have. So I really am hopeful that we can move towards a respectable nation where we really do care about our fellow citizen.

**Jessica Thayer** (01:50): I dream about times, I don't know, long ago were really, that was the building democracy and being able to live in a peaceful world while having differences. If we had a democracy full of like-minded people, it would be terrible. Nothing new would ever be created, we would all always agree or always disagree and nothing would be productive or new or exciting.

**Jessica Thayer** (02:19): And people want to make a democracy, this perfect union where there's no disparity, no disagreements, no anger or mistrust. And I don't think that's how it was meant to be, I think that we are all individual-minded people, and there's something spectacular in how we use those differences to put us together. And compromise is absolutely everything. So, I'm really excited to see how the Biden administration works through that in these next couple of years.