

Plato's Apology

For I am certain, men of Athens, that if I had engaged in politics, I should have perished long ago and done no good either to you or to myself. And don't be offended at my telling you the truth, he who will really fight for the right, if he would live even for a little while, must have a private station and not a public one.

The only office of state which I ever held, men of Athens, was that of senator. I gave my vote against you; and when the orators threatened to impeach and arrest me, and have me taken away...I made up my mind that I would run the risk, having law and justice with me, rather than take part in your injustice because I feared imprisonment and death.

Guiding Questions

1. What is Plato describing when he speaks of a public/private life?
2. What is Plato's strongest argument against becoming involved in politics? Why did you select this statement?