

The Election Process: Truth, Fiction, Reality, and Opinion

First, you need to know that my mom was a Republican and my dad was a Democrat. They really didn't talk much politics.

They knew me, and my brothers and sisters would all grow up soon enough and, as we all should do, shoulder the responsibilities of our convictions and beliefs. There would be plenty of time for that later in our young lives.

My first real recollection of an election was when Five Star General Dwight David Eisenhower won in 1952, defeating Senator Adlai Stevenson, a senator from Illinois. What I remember was General Eisenhower's slogan, "I like Ike." As a kid that was all that mattered to me. I don't remember Senator Stevenson's slogan, so maybe the guy with the best slogan does have a better chance. That's an opinion.

What I do remember about Stevenson is when he was our ambassador to the United Nations during the Cuban Missile Crisis, as it was called in 1962, he stood up against the Russian ambassador and asked some tough questions. When the Russian ambassador said he would have to wait for the Russians' answer, Stevenson said, "I am prepared to wait until hell freezes over." That was impressive and he became a true hero. That's the truth.

On the evening of the 1952 election, I remember I was sprawled out on the living room floor in front of a 16-inch round screen TV in our tiny 450 square foot "dream home" with carpet and everything, warm and happy. When the election results came in, Mom just smiled because her guy won and Dad said, "Well, we survived the last Republican president. Guess we can survive this one."

In those days, for the first time in his young life, my dad was making "good money" as a union painter. Life was good and he didn't want to see anything

change. But, we all know change is inevitable. It's hard to face, but change is an integral part of our political system as well. Over time, we the people sort out the truth and make the necessary changes that keep our nation strong.

Sadly, the election process brings out the absolute worst in some people. I can't believe the negative ad campaigns on both sides of the aisle. We are hammered with rhetoric day and night, a constant barrage of phone calls to the point that I don't believe much of anything that is said. There is the fiction.

What the political leaders do is what counts. It's what they accomplish as individuals, before and after an election, that matters to me. Another opinion.

Elections are a necessary part of our political system which, no matter what, remains the absolute best system. We don't need to abandon our democratic political system. We do need to take a hard look at what we do to influence the vote. Too much time and money is wasted on empty promises and pie in the sky dreams by both parties that simply are impossible to achieve.

The process of winning an election has become a huge business unto itself. Consider for a moment that in excess of \$5 billion was spent on the 2008 election. Granted, that was a big election year, but there is a problem when the process overshadows the reality of what we are trying to accomplish. The political system needs a thorough overhaul. The election process is a distraction from the real business of seeking out the smartest and best leaders to serve our country. We need to change this.

In this election, the Republican Party has gained substantial ground and will enjoy a period of euphoria. When that runs its course, Republicans and Democrats both will be charged with the responsibility of dealing with the economy, unemployment, and health care costs - all these things, both here and around the world. The party will be over and it will be time to move forward with the most serious business of running our country. We have got to work together to make real progress. That is reality.

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