

MEMO FROM THE MAYOR

SUBJECT: Considerations for Voting in May's Primaries

At a Glance:

- "Every child in America should be acquainted with his own country. He should read books that furnish him with ideas that will be useful to him in life and practice. As soon as he opens his lips, he should rehearse the history of his own country."
Noah Webster, On the Education of Youth in America, 1788
- "If Virtue & Knowledge are diffused among the People, they will never be enslav'd. This will be their great Security."
Samuel Adams, letter to James Warren, February 12, 1779
- "If truth be not diffused, error will be."
Daniel Webster
- "The truth is like a lion. You don't have to defend it. Let it loose. It will defend itself."
Saint Augustine

Now, Where Is All That Virtue and Knowledge, All That Hope and Change?

Primary elections will soon be upon us. Accordingly, I thought it meet, right, and salutary to take a break before I answer next month the question posed in the last four columns concerning whether a return to real and fundamental constitutional principles will save our Republic. If we take into account the thoughts of the giants at the Founding (and one saint) set out above, we bump into the proverbial "A Bridge Too Far". Why?

On February 1st, the U.S. Treasury Department reported that the U.S. gross national debt had surpassed \$30 trillion for the first time. A trillion-dollar deficit is tough enough; but how does one comprehend the figure of \$30 trillion even in the best of times, let alone in what will likely become the worst of our times, economically?

Albert Einstein once quipped: "We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them." Obviously, Einstein would have thoughts about how, beginning with Bush 43, every administration has made our deficit worse and worse until it is now of Biblical proportions (Yes, Trump did it too).

Indeed, what clearer description can there be of "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and upon the children's children unto the third and fourth generation"? Our great

grandchildren are saddled with the debt we have created by voting for the same politicians over and over who lack solutions for problems apart from printing fiat money to simply throw at them.

One evening this last month, after spending most of the day in Nampa at Association of Idaho Cities workshops, I attended a get-together of like-minded conservatives. Our concern focused on the direction taken by our country. We perceive that too many of our institutions have been captured by special interest groups and corporations. Let's call this phenomenon, The Arrival of the Oligarchs and The Demise of We the People.

It also seems that many of our politicians we rely upon have been captured as well. They will deny it, of course, but actions always speak louder than words. During this informal get-together—to which I was not particularly looking forward after a full day of head-exploding PowerPoint presentations—I was actually energized. Over the next couple of hours, I learned some effective “voter hacks” and was asked to pass them on. I am pleased to do so.

Some Basic Rules for Selecting the Right Candidate

- **FIRST RULE:** Always avoid recommendations from biased media that suppress dissenting views or distort the truth. For those who wish to learn techniques in identifying media bias, the New Jersey Institute of Technology might be the site for you to find some help. [<https://researchguides.njit.edu/evaluate/bias>] (Last accessed on 10 December 2023).
- **SECOND RULE:** Follow the money. Deep Throat told us that almost fifty years ago! In Idaho, it's easy to do. Go to <https://sos.idaho.gov/elections-division/campaign-finance-filing/>; scroll down to the year in question, once that page comes up, there are several “drop downs” on the left that will give you the candidates and the offices you desire to track.
- **THIRD RULE:** Use your critical thinking skills! When it comes to politics, being skeptical is required. Is the information provided fact, opinion, or propaganda? If fact, can you verify it? Are any assumptions made, reasonable? What about errors or omissions of information?
- **FOURTH RULE:** Never fully trust social media, commercials or campaign signs of the candidate in question. That is not using one's critical-thinking skills. That's simply accepting propaganda. Does the candidate have a solid background and record of

positive accomplishments? Do you find it substantial enough to the candidate's continuance in office or to gain the office sought?

- FIFTH RULE: Do your own research using primary sources. Review the official platforms of the political party in question. Read the candidate's website, verifying claims and ferret out any untruths. Attend as many in-person events as practicable.

When possible, ask direct questions of the candidate(s), listening carefully to the answers. Are these hacks fool-proof? No. But they will make you a better-informed voter, thus better fortified to carry out your "civic duty"—a duty designed to keep us free.