



Utah Election Recap

Utah Statewide Election--

Unlike the National election, which will result in a big change in leadership and direction for our country, the results of the Utah election were about continuing down our same pathway. Which isn't bad because from a state level, we have a lot of good things going for us.

Governor Gary Herbert won by a large margin, which I think is an accurate reflection of the fact that he works hard and represents Utah's values very well.

All of the other statewide officials on the ballot, like Attorney General (Sean Reyes), Auditor (John Dougal), and Treasurer (Dave Damschen) also won, and my opinion is that all of them are doing a good job and will continue to serve the state well.



Utah Legislature--

If you look at our legislature through the Republican-Democrat lens, this election kept things almost exactly the same. In the Senate, there was no net change in the representation by the two parties. It remains at Republicans: 24 members and Democrats: 5 members. In the House, it looks like there will be a net change of a 1 seat decrease for the Republicans. So the new representation by party will be 62 Republican Representatives, and 13 Democrats.

If you instead look just at the total turn-over, of how many seats will be filled by a new person, there are 15 new incoming legislators (out of a total of 75 seats), so that is a 20 percent turn over.

School Board--

The school board was kind of the opposite of the legislature. None of the incumbents for the state school board will be returning. Some of them had decided to not run again, and every single one that did run again lost to a challenger. The new people who were elected are a fairly diverse group that have different view points, so that doesn't mean that the board is all going to be united in a certain direction, but it will be a chance for "new blood" to think about the problems facing our schools. On a local level, Bountiful will be represented by two new individuals on our Davis School Board. Congratulations to Liz Mumford and John Robison on their wins. I think they will do a great job.

Utah Constitution--

Two of the three suggested amendments to the Utah Constitution passed. Amendment A was just a clarifying change, that won't make much of a difference, but Amendment B will allow an increased amount of money to come to our schools from our state trust lands, so hopefully in the next year or two our Community Councils in our schools will be having a little more money to work with.

The Courage to Compromise

Sometimes you read something, and say to yourself--"Yes!! -- That is what I believe." And that happened to me recently when I read this op-ed column written for the BYU political review. In the interest of full disclosure -- I will clarify that it was written by my son Stephen, but I think he makes some very good points, and in light of the anger and divisiveness that characterized our recent national election, I really think it is worth your consideration.



The Courage to Compromise

The year was 1787, and an assembly of fifty-five men had convened at Philadelphia to overhaul the central government of the newly established United States. For almost four months, this collection of lawyers, merchants, army officers, shippers, and farmers debated over the legal minutia of the document that would eventually become the US Constitution. The result was a jumble of compromises which included elements that were objectionable to almost every party involved. But despite their individual reservations, with varying degrees of enthusiasm they supported the final document. Benjamin Franklin may have best articulated the feelings of these signers when he said "There are several parts of this Constitution which I do not at present approve, but I am not sure I shall never approve them ... Sir, I agree to this Constitution with all its faults, if there are such ... [for I doubt] whether any other Convention we can obtain, may be able to make a better Constitution." The Constitution was eventually endorsed by the convention, and by 1790 it had been ratified in all thirteen colonies, though it was initially met with fearsome opposition. Anti-Federalists pointed out that the powers granted to a central government sounded suspiciously similar to the monarchy that the nation had just abandoned. The initial absence of a Bill of Rights protecting individual liberties left open the door to tyranny by the new government. And the official sanction of slavery in the document was particularly loathsome to abolitionists, who howled that it undermined the very principles of freedom upon which the nation was trying to build. And yet, among the most vocal supporters of the Constitution were abolitionists like Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and the aforementioned Benjamin Franklin. These men understood the value of compromise. They were willing to put personal qualms aside to fight for a greater good, accepting that an imperfect solution

is infinitely better than no solution at all.

Would a document like the US Constitution be ratified in our day? I strongly doubt it. We as a nation are swiftly losing the ability to accept compromise, stamping our feet and pouting until we get our political way. Our knee-jerk reaction is to vehemently oppose any legislation that contains even the smallest clause that we find objectionable. This is not healthy. It is obviously admirable to stand up for what one believes in, and our political discourse thrives on earnest input from many different parties. However, it doesn't take an expert to see that when every person in a large and diverse society refuses to accept anything short of a total vindication of his or her personal views, no progress will be made. We need the maturity of our federalist forefathers, who were willing to put positive pragmatism before perfectionist idealism. This idea was well expressed much later by George H.W. Bush, who said "This mean humorless philosophy which says everybody should agree on absolutely everything is not good ... When the word 'moderation' becomes a dirty word we have some soul searching to do."

Additionally, we have become far too quick to label those with different political views from our own as the "enemy", assuming evil intent, self-serving motivations, and outright stupidity. While it is true that there are occasionally those who, as Batman's butler Alfred would put it, "just want to watch the world burn", I believe that these are few and far between. In the vast majority of cases, opposing political views are not a contest between good and evil, but rather a contrast between two or more different emphases on moral principles stemming from different backgrounds and experience. If we are willing to respectfully hear each other out and communicate despite our disagreements, I believe that this diversity can be a source of strength, rather than a source of contention.

So what are we to do about this climate of political polarization and antagonism? It is easy and tempting to heap all the blame on "those corrupt politicians", or "the media", or especially "those darn conservatives/liberals/pro-life/anti-gun/insert-some-other-position-with-which-you-disagree." But at the end of the day, to quote Mahatma Gandhi, "You must be the change you wish to see in the world." Each one of us must take some responsibility to try to be kinder to our rivals and, without completely abandoning our own moral principles, be more willing to compromise with them.

We can start by making a real effort to see the world from the point of view of those with whom we have differences. We can look for the goodness and the righteousness in their arguments, even if we cannot fully agree with them. We can try to engage in respectful, two-way debate, both in person and on the Internet, making sure to really listen when the other person is speaking. We can refrain from reposting aggressive political memes and videos on social media, which so often make gross overgeneralizations of what a group actually believes without giving it any chance to defend itself. And above all, we can choose to look at political compromise as a virtue to be sought after, rather than a betrayal of personal morality.

I am not so naïve as to suggest that politics has historically been a civil, pleasant dialogue that suddenly devolved into partisan madness around the turn of the millennium. But I do think that with real effort on the part of individuals nationwide to understand and compromise with one another, we can become the Hamiltons and Franklins of our day. It is through our political diversity, rather than in spite of it, that we can and will continue to advance the ideals of our great country.

400 North Misery Update

If you are a Bountiful driver, you will know that the 400 North construction project has been making things difficult for some time now.

The reason for the upgrade is to install concrete roadway that will require less long term maintenance, and to replace some of the aging piping infrastructure underneath the road.

The project has been dragged out for longer than expected because half way through the construction it was discovered that it had been engineered incorrectly (There was a 6 inch vertical mismatch between two of the sections of cement), so they had to tear up some of what was done and re-engineer it and re-pour the concrete.

We are now past that series of unfortunate events, and in the next 2-3 weeks the remaining concrete will be poured and after it has had 10 days to set properly, we should be about at the finish line.

If you are interested in receiving updates from the Utah Department of Transportation about this (or other) construction projects, they do a good job of sending updates to your email inbox if you request. [Here is the link for the 400 North project.](#)



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