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# Presidential Preliminaries

Community Comment

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If you watch television or listen to the radio it is abundantly clear that we are fully engaged in the race for President. The focus so far has been on the Republican Party. This is natural since they are not the party in the White House. There is no incumbent nor is there an obvious nominee. Mitt Romney has been labeled the front runner and has won the first two primaries. That is if you call the Iowa Caucus a primary. And if you call an eight vote margin a win. I'm not a republican so I have little to say in their choice of a nominee. I'm also not for helping to select their choice by influencing or voting in their primary election. I'm a strong believer in each party choosing their own candidate. I don't even care for party anointments taking place. When our current congressman learned he would no longer be representing us due to redistricting, I thought it was inappropriate to recommend his choice of successor. I'm a registered democrat and I think I am quite capable of examining the field of democratic candidates and choosing the one I think would best represent me and our district.

This is a part of what is wrong with our two party system. Two parties should be a workable democratic approach to politics. I like it better than the coalition of a number of parties that often have to come together to form a working government. <sup>in many other countries</sup> This approach tends to cloud the issues so much that it is hard to make significant progress on pressing issues. But our current situation is no better. We have representatives that sign pledges or make promises that seem principled but don't seem to understand that politics is the art of discussion, argument and compromise. When someone is elected, they become the representative of their district, not just those who voted for them. That's what makes being in elected office a difficult job. These days, most districts including the one the President represents, is won by 51 to 55 percent. This means a bare majority voted for the winner, and within that majority few agree with everything the party or the candidate believes should be done. Leadership comes from making the effort to forge decisions that consider the minority position. To do less does a disservice to representative government.

I hope as both parties go forward towards November, the candidates consider putting the country first. But for this to happen it means each of us who vote have to also realize that we live in a country of over 300 million people. The sheer number makes these decisions more difficult and more important. Our neighbor is not our enemy. Different opinions make for a richer but more complicated society.

In the United States, three elements stand out to me as essential to our political success over the past two hundred years. Our founders and most of us along the historical path of our nation seem to get that a stable government and society allows for planning ahead, which leads to economic stability and an individual's ability to do better than their parents. Second, we seem to understand that while the majority rules, the majority cannot become a tyrant over the minority. And third, while our founders were rooted in the Christian faith, we made room for wave after wave of immigrants who brought cultural

and religious diversity. Those already here developed tolerance for these new Americans and those who came tried their best to fit in. The result is the melting pot we like to refer to. It is not always easy but look at the gift it has given us.

November will come sooner than we think. The people rule when we pick our representative wisely.

This has been Sam Pennisi for community comment.