

My Voting Plans and Rationale

Harry Strachan, October, 2020

Family members fearing, as one said, “it will make both sides of my family mad at me” have had the courage to share their political positions. Following their lead, I’ll do the same.

Historically, I am registered as an independent. who feels unrepresented by both major parties. I am alienated by the way both parties pander to American’s propensity to think of itself as “the good guys” and others as “enemies” and turn most issues into “wars,” to be solved by violence and coercion (the drug problem, terrorism, even trade and poverty).

On November 3, 2020 I plan to vote for Democrats in all the national positions (President, Senate, Congress). I want a Democratic landslide to be a resounding rejection of both Donald Trump as an individual. (It is important that the Trump style: narcissistic, arrogantly ignorant, lying, and nasty, be discouraged in politicians.) But it is even more important that Trumpistic policies be thoroughly rejected: the anti-science, anti-expert approach to complex problems; unilateral dismantling of the International order responsible for much of the success of the last 80 years. His leaving WHO, the Climate accord, repealing the Iran and trade treaties has in my opinion damaged U.S. leadership and gained us almost nothing.)

In 2008 I thought both Obama and Romney excellent candidates from my alma mater HLS, and hoped whoever won would enlist the other’s bipartisan help in getting us out the 2008 economic crisis.

In case of a landslide that give Democrats control of both houses and the Presidency, I am hoping that Biden can be persuaded to reach across the aisle for a bipartisan approach on the important challenges facing the U.S. like climate change, immigration reform, public health reforms, and systemic racism. He’ll be in a position to insist on real solutions, while inviting Republican help on the best way of achieving the reforms. In the process he begins to reverse the political polarization crippling us.

Many in my family feel that abortion is such an important issue, it determines their vote. I respect their moral position. However, I feel that laws and the coercive power of the state should be limited to ensuring safety and the common good. Laws should focus on minimal acceptable behavior and not to try to make us saints. So, in choosing leaders I focus on the most important problems requiring government action and leadership and am not a single-issue voter.

The three challenges at the top of my list for the whole world are 1) The problem of climate change and planet sustainability. 2) Peace: eliminating wars and military force as the default way of achieving our international objectives. 3) Prosperity for all (to which all contribute and from which they benefit).

On all three, Trumpism has taken the U.S. in the wrong direction with virtually no push back from Republicans. Trumpism denies problem #1, has taken us out of the climate accord and tried to dismantle programs to reduce CO2 emissions. On #2 he has increased the military budget, escalated belligerent language, and turned our relations with China into a new cold war. On #3, he has only aggravated the already serious income inequalities with some of his tax policies (not to mention his scandalous cheating on his own tax returns). He has promised but not delivered on the investments in infrastructure, education and productive capacity that we need if everyone is to contribute.

In the U.S., two additional challenges of highest priorities are 4) Immigration reform and 5) Elimination of systemic biases.

On #4 Trump could have tried to solve the problem with a bipartisan immigration reform bill but has deliberately decided not to solve the problems of designing the guest worker programs America needs, visa management reforms that benefits the U.S., a humanitarian solution to the inherited DACA problem from years of bipartisan mismanagement, in addition to securing the borders. Instead he has focused on a useless border wall and used the immigration issue to inflame his base.

On #5, Trump refuses to even acknowledge the reality of systemic bias in our institutions, which have been so clearly exposed this past year and needs to be addressed with serious reforms.

Democrats in 2020 share my concerns, so I will give them my vote in 2020. I suspect, a large number of Republicans, will either vote for Biden or abstain. They feel their party, which historically has been a champion of international cooperation, global trade, smart economic management has been, has been hijacked.

That is another reason why I hope that Biden asks for help across the aisle if he wins. If he does and they join him in addressing the really important issues, maybe we all will really Make America Great!"