



PERSPECTIVES



by **Rinaldo S. Brutoco**

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LET MY PEOPLE GO – Part II *It's Time to End Two-Party Politics*

The February 18th edition of this column carried an impassioned plea for the two political parties, which together represent less than 50 percent of the voters, to let our people go! To let us pass into real democracy from the shared monopoly in US politics that the Democrats and Republicans jointly control to their advantage, and to the great detriment for the rest of us. Three things just happened that require me to re-visit this vital topic.

First, as reported in my earlier column, and in the press generally, Senate Minority Leader **Mitch McConnell** (currently the highest-ranking Republican officeholder) agreed with the House Impeachment Managers that former President **Trump** was “practically and morally responsible for [the Capital Hill insurrection designed to overturn the election] ...no question.” And yet, on Friday when asked publicly whether he, McConnell, would support Trump as the Republican nominee in 2024 without hesitation he responded “Absolutely.” *WHAT???*

McConnell agrees that Trump tried, and nearly succeeded in overthrowing the legitimately elected US government. Why would he agree to give Trump another chance to destroy our American Constitutional system? Because his commitment to do so keeps him in a power-sharing agreement with the Democrats where the professional political class always wins and we, The People, lose. We, The People, get lost in the arcane “game” played by both Democrats and Republicans that keeps us enslaved to a political system that is neither democratic nor effective at problem solving. It only seeks to perpetuate the two-party system, even as fewer of us belong to either party, leaving us underrepresented in effect.

Second, last week *The Economist's* “Intelligence Unit” published its 2020 Global Democracy Index entitled: “Global Democracy Has A Very Bad Year.” Indeed, it did. In their words “The annual survey... rates the state of democracy across 167 countries based on five measures — electoral process and pluralism, the functioning of government, political participation, democratic political culture and civil liberties—and finds that just 8.4 percent of the world's population live in a full democracy.”

The US is *NOT* counted in that 8.4 percent who enjoy “full democracy”! The “full democracy” countries do include Canada, Norway, Netherlands, Iceland, Sweden, Australia,

Denmark, New Zealand, our friends in Britain, Germany and Switzerland. They are all stand outs.

In commenting specifically on the US, *The Economist* labeled it a “flawed democracy” ranked at #25 down the list for all the reasons previously featured in Perspectives under the heading of “Minority Rule.” They observed that we have rules permitting a minority, even one that lost by more than 7,000,000 votes in our recent national election, to still retain a stranglehold on national governance even though the Republican party represents only about 17 percent of total registered voters.

As *The Economist* notes, one hallmark of a true democracy is that when a party loses an election it is unable to block the political agenda of the party that wins. Not here in the US, where the Democrats are jumping through ridiculous hoops to come within the ambit of the “Byrd Rule.” This isn't even a statute or a law. Like the abhorrent filibuster rule, it is a precedent that 51 percent of the Senate can change at any time. Yet they don't. Why? Will the inability to pass a bill that 75 percent of the American people support, like the Covid Relief Bill, through a simple majority Senate vote be the final straw? Or, will the Democrats “play footsie” with the Republicans again at the expense of the voters?

Will the Democrats allow the Republicans to block the long overdue increase to the \$7.25/hour Minimum Wage (which hasn't increased in 12 years) when: 1) the business community overwhelmingly supports it; 2) a supermajority of Americans from all political corners support it; 3) the Trump appointed Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board (Jerome Powell) enthusiastically supports it along with the Democratically appointed Secretary of the Treasury (Janet Yellen) and 4) when virtually all credible mainstream economists believe it is very good to help over 20 million full time workers rise out of poverty? Sadly, my suspicion is that clinging to the anti-democratic two-party system will keep the Democrats from doing what they, and the public, clearly know is right in order to keep a two-party system in place.

Third, the Conservative Political Action Committee (“CPAC”) this week anointed Donald Trump, the insurrectionist leader of the rebellion who sought to overthrow our government, as the leader of the Republican

Party. That's how distorted and ridiculous the two-party system has become. It's time for a better solution. The Republican Party has decided to keep QAnon supported Trump as their leader. Unfortunately, it will lead to their total annihilation as the major alternative to the Democratic party. Trapped between these two unacceptable choices, more and more of us are becoming Independents. We actually total well over 54 percent of all voters already and that number will surely rise.

Why? Because we're tired of the current "Tweedledee" and "Tweedledum" combination.

There were no "parties" at the founding of our Republic. Many Founders didn't want any. There were "factions" like the Federalists Alexander Hamilton formed as the first political party, which he saw as working for a strong central government and in opposition to the "Jacobins" (seen as the mob that took down the French Crown) and the "Democratic-Republicans" (perceived to be in favor of "mob rule"). Ultimately the Federalists petered out and loosely became the ancestor of the Whig party.

Meanwhile, the "Old Republican Party" was formed by anti-Federalists lead by Thomas Jefferson in the early 1790s. And, in a curious twist of fate, the Old Republican party actually became the ancestor of what we now call the Democrats! Along the way, other political parties like the Jacksonians and the National Republican Party (not to be confused with either the Old Republican Party or the Democratic-Republican Party), the Know-Nothings and the Whigs themselves all arose and fell into obscurity.

The point is, we've had plenty of political parties this country's history. It is only in the last 100+ years we've been willing to enshrine the modern-day Democrats and Republicans with exclusive shared control of our government. Until we change that we'll never be able to "Let My People Go."

Watch for the third and final installment of this series where we'll explain the pros and cons of a multi-party system versus a two-party system; how we can get there; and how it will free us up to live, at last again, in a "full" rather than "flawed" democracy.

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