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Steve Glines

On forming a committee to explore the possibility of running

JUST A THOUGHT - I'm thinking of forming a committee to explore the possibility of running for President of the United States of America as a Democrat. Everyone's doing it. It's very fashionable; it's de rigueur. Don't get me wrong, I don't want to do the work, so running is easy, losing even easier, and the chances that I might win are about the same as a loud-mouth TV star winning. Oh, wait. Well, I'm sure I couldn't do any worse. I might actually read some of the more fascinating stuff the spooks dig up. I'd learn all about Area 51 and who really killed JFK. I'm not sure that's a good reason to run, however. A better reason to run is that not a single man or woman running, on either side of the fence seem to have a clue what's eating at heart of the American people. I'm not sure I do either, but when I tell people what I think, almost everyone agrees with me. A few Trumpites will never agree with me even if they lose their healthcare and Social Security. They'd rather be homeless and starving than give in to that Russian Commie plot. Excuse me?

The fundamental difference between the Republican (autocorrect almost let me type reptilian) and Democratic Parties are their view of what the purpose of Government is. I said Government with a capital G because I'm going to speak of governments in the abstract. This applies to the "government" consisting of a small neighborhood committee, local town, county, and state government as well as national and supra-national organizations like the U.N.

To the Democratic Party, the one I belong to, the purpose of government is to do those things that the individual cannot do for themselves. As such we band together to do those things we all feel we need like roads, police and fire departments and, for the last 100 plus years, schools that offer a minimum of twelve years of education. Adding four more years in this technically sophisticated era won't kill us. Businesses that benefit from this highly educated pool of workers should bear the burden of the extra costs of that education. If your business needs a Ph.D., then your company should pay the premium required to get that person. That's the minimum that almost everyone (I know mostly liberals) can agree to across all sectors of the country. Of course, some outliers believe that schools are bad.

The other side, currently called the Republicans, believes that almost any government is too much government and any communal effort is a sign of weakness, of creeping Socialism or whatever ism is out of fashion. The Republicans say they believe in rugged individualism, and if you can't hack it, well there is Darwin.

One reason it's hard to argue with Republicans is that there are so many differing single-issue Republicans. I've known rabid Republicans driven by a single topic like abortion. How many people have been killed by these rabid religious extremists? Once, when I ran for school committee, a woman asked me what I thought of the abortion issue. I asked her what that had to do with the school committee job and she replied that if I won that I'd go on to greater things and she wanted to know my position right away. I lost that election, but my answer to her was that it was none of my business, that it was strictly the woman's business and by extension,

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it was none of the state's business either. I'll stand by that answer.

Another single issue that drives the Republican cabal is gun control. All the second amendment says is, "A well-regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed." It doesn't give you any right to a tank or a machine gun or even a handgun. It says that militias need guns if the state is going to survive. My position is that if you aren't part of a "well regulated" militia (we call them police and National Guard now), you have no right to a gun. I'd like to see local police enforce that. You only get to play with guns if your local Police Chief says so. I'd be willing to put money on the Supreme Court agreeing with me if it ever got there in that form.

The other big issue that has Republicans all in a snit is immigration. Unless you're a native American, you are an immigrant or the descendant of an immigrant. It's the height of hypocrisy to complain about immigrants. To fire up the mob, the Republicans say that these illegal immigrants are stealing American Jobs. Let's be clear. Your food is picked, packaged, cleaned, and butchered by migrant workers, some of whom choose to stay here and work and are thus declared illegal. Cut that flow off entirely, and we'll all starve. Where immigrants do take American jobs are with H1b visas. Corporate America loves H1b visas because an Asian tech worker will gladly do for \$25,000 what an America Citizen once did for \$100,000. Who is fooling who?

What the Republicans don't understand or won't tell you is that immigration is the only thing keeping our economy growing. Generation X and Millennials aren't having kids at a rate that even maintains the current population, let alone grow it. We descended past zero population growth back in 1978, according to one study I read. The roughly one hundred million people we've added to the U.S. population since then have almost totally come from immigration. In this, we are unique.

Most of Western Europe is losing population. Russia is hemorrhaging population, as is Japan, and China is poised, thanks to its one child per couple policy, to experience a huge population crash. It's been estimated that India will eclipse China as the worlds largest country by 2050. It should be noted that the Germans initially welcomed the influx of refugees from the middle east because they too were experiencing extreme labor shortages, especially in the east. Like the U.S., Germany succumbed to the "not like me" syndrome. In Germany, refugees don't speak German. In the U.S. the refugees speak Spanish or indigenous, native languages like those spoken by the Incas and Mayan.

This is not to say that illegal immigration is not a problem, it is. But the primary beneficiary of illegal immigration are not the immigrants but rather the businesses that hire them, cheat them, and abuse them. The best way to escape a payroll is to call ICE just before payday. The Republicans may say they want to build a wall, and Trump may indeed want one personally, but shutting down the border would impact American industry too much to allow it to happen.

As Democrats, we want immigrants, but we want legal immigrants, and we want them to have a path to citizenship as we have enjoyed. By creating this path we attack directly the abuse of those already here ille-

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gally and stem the flow of those desperate enough to sneak into the U.S. The whole point of NAFTA was to stimulate the economies of Mexico and Central America so that the flow would slow. It did, much to the chagrin of the Republicans who secretly really want the chaos to continue.

Finally, there is health care. We all need it, and we already pay for it through private insurance or the public dole. The only difference is that there are a lot of companies and individuals making a fortune from our ill health and misfortune. No other civilized country in the world does this. As a result, we have the most expensive but hardly the best health care system in the world.

From the preamble to the constitution we are instructed that, "... in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity" I would argue that the founding fathers ordained that health care is nothing short of a public need like roads, food, shelter, etc. It's part of promoting the general welfare. Since we have a combination of public and private schools, we should be able to have both public and private health care. However, public healthcare should in no way be inferior.

Finally, on the reach of the judiciary: We have been holding refugees in what amount to concentration camps. And we have been holding, without trial or even hope of a trial, prisoners of war in Cuba. In no case should any living person, held in the custody of the United States, anywhere in the world, be stripped of the rights of due process.

We pretend to be the shining light on the top of the hill. It's about time we lived up to those aspirations.