

## Is There a Reason to Vote for Trump?

Predicting is a dangerous activity, especially in the Age of Uncertainty. Assuming that both Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump make it to Election Day without being indicted or resigning as candidates, it is quite likely that the Democratic victory will be one of historic proportions. It is difficult to imagine any other scenario, when Donald Trump is rejected by the left, the middle, and a great many people in his own party. Even those who support Trump, try to be very quiet about it lest they alienate most of their friends.

Marginal and hysterical candidates are sometimes good for the electoral process because they help to bring divisive issues to the forefront of an otherwise yawning electorate. So what are those Trump issues that are worth looking at, for those who have not already made up their minds as to who they are going to vote for in November?

1. Everyone likes a martyr and an underdog. I once named a dog Underdog, and he was everyone's favorite dog. Feeling sorry, even for the biggest jerk in the classroom, is a positive human characteristic. We are told by the Holy Books, "Have contempt for no one, or every person has their season." Likewise, "Judge not, lest ye be judged." Trump is worth considering because we should resist the temptation to beat up on other people, "Do not join a mob to do evil."

2. Family. Donald Trump appears to have a genuinely nice wife, daughters, sons-in-law and sons. It is lovely that Donald Trump's wife, Melania, respects a Democrat, Michelle Obama, so much, that she will utilize her words in a public forum. No one can fail to be impressed by daughter Ivanka, who is articulate, gracious, and will identify issues important to women. My more cynical friends say that the family members have effectively been "bought off." Who wouldn't like their beautiful, intelligent family members to stand up before a few million people and say nice things about them?

3. Foreign aid. The question of the United States' foreign aid to NATO, the United Nations and individual countries has lurked in the background for many years. These programs deserve a review. Are we overpaying our fair share? Have we failed to take into account the economic success of those we are helping? Is there a value in strong alliances, capable allies and invigorated democracies? What is the real cost of that, when the benefits are put on the scale with the expenses? It is a discussion worth having. A stable world is good for the American economy and our survival. It should also be noted that much foreign aid is in effect a subsidy to our own industry. Countries that we give lots of money to wind up buying Boeing airplanes, the largest exporter in the United States. Our military manufacturers count their blessings thanks to foreign purchases of our equipment. Airbus, the European manufacturing consortium that competes against Boeing, has complained bitterly that United States' military expenditures act as a subsidy for Boeing. The way to rebalance the United States'

financial obligations to the world community is not through threats, but is the result of competent and experienced negotiations and tradeoffs.

4. Speaking his mind. Everyone likes a person who honestly speaks his mind. People are tired of tepid politicians who dance around important issues and try to please everyone, a pabulum that sometimes cannot even be readily understood. "Donald says it like it is." A bit more directness, with respect that Trump often does not show, would not hurt the political process at all.

5. Corruption in politics. Trump is absolutely correct that the system is "rigged." He is not the first one to say this, but it has not been a national issue for a long time in American politics. Unfortunately, Trump has not spoken out against court decisions equating corporate donations with free speech rights. That particular expansion of First Amendment constitutional protections does not seem to bother those who seek a strict construction of the Constitution. Hypocrisy, in politics, is not a mortal sin. Nevertheless, bringing the issue of corruption, buying of votes, donations in return for pardons, and heavy-duty fundraising among those who have an interest in legislative outcomes requires discussion. Perhaps Trump's awkward attempt at populist themes will mirror the Bernie Sanders message. We need to have a discussion about public financing of elections and what it would take to keep unchaste lobbying of the government to an acceptable level.

6. Free trade is not free. We are promised a level playing field in terms of wages and environmental policy when both Republicans and Democrats campaigned for free trade. We did not get that. What we did get is a way for big corporations to exploit cheap labor overseas. That makes things less expensive in America and put the middle class out of work. These trade deals do need to be reviewed, critiqued, and their effect needs to be honestly studied. Free trade is great because it reduces barriers between people and helps to keep the peace. Free trade is not good when it is yet another way for the big boys to make huge profits off the backs of Middle Americans. Thank you, Donald and Bernie, for bringing up this issue.

7. Immigration. A wall built by Mexico had become the joke of the campaign. However, it has made people sit up and take notice, keeping on the front burner, the question of immigration reform. There actually was a deal during the Obama administration between Republicans and Democrats. The negotiations fell through because the Democrats wanted the path to citizenship first, and secure borders second. The Republicans wanted the reverse. Nobody trusted each other to fulfill their end of the bargain. Doing both at the same time is the key. The Coalition of industry looking for cheap labor, and Democrats looking for votes are pushing for an easier immigration policy. Those who fear the ability of the United States to absorb the large number of immigrants, some of whom have questionable backgrounds, are fighting for a more restricted policy. The issues need to be hashed out, in the open. The truth is less comfortable than the 30-second advertising spots. We need to integrate the productive non-citizens into our country and make sure they pay taxes, while getting rid of the

undesirables. We then need to have a policy going forward that is logical and in the interests of all Americans.

8. The tax system. Everyone rails about the tax system, and nobody does anything about it. A simpler tax system is no simple matter. Nevertheless, Donald Trump has raised the issue. Do we need more taxes or fewer taxes to stimulate the economy? How about spending? Do we need to prime the pump or give the pump a rest? Unfortunately, both parties rejected the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform, often called the Simpson-Bowles Commission. The report fell short of the supermajority that was needed to endorse a reasonable, workable approach to our national budget deficit crisis and unsustainable entitlement programs. So far in the campaign, nobody has been asked whether they support the Commission proposals, but sooner or later some reporter may bring up the subject. Both Hillary and Donald say the same thing, "We will solve the underemployment and dead issue through growth." Growth will help, but every economist in his right mind knows it will not solve the problem. Simpson-Bowles knew there needed to be much less spending, and a major tweaking of the tax system to assure that everyone pays their fair share. That is a good beginning.

9. Crime and terrorism. Both candidates have meaningless talking points on both issues. Trump can be credited with challenging the African-American community to get a handle on its own family problems which produce most of the crime against African-Americans in this country. No one has heard a thoughtful proposal from Trump, but he has assured that the issue will be discussed in grotesque detail. Keep all Muslims out? Only keep out bad Muslims? Fill the streets with more cops? Will there be a serious discussion about whether preschools will help strengthen disadvantaged families in this country? What is the role of the government versus the individual to get a handle on the and family disintegration process?

Donald Trump's buckshot, seat-of-the-pants election campaign will guarantee that a broad range of topics will get discussed. Both parties will take the simple reptilian approach, simply attempting to have the electorate react out of fear. Whether Donald Trump is exposing these issues will actually result in a meaningful discussion as unlikely but not hopeless.

While Hillary Clinton is a very predictable status quo Tammany Hall-type liberal, Trump may turn out to be harder to define. He thinks "people like me" should pay more taxes, but his proposals are unbalanced. He loves and helps Mexicans, women, black people and every other conceivable minority, and then proceeds to offend them every time he opens his mouth.

My dad was a building contractor in New York, including in Queens County, where Donald and Freddie Trump came from. We even owned some real estate in Woodhaven, where the Trumps came from. I have run across many Donald Trumps in my life; people who were successful because they knew how to make dough off the hides of others and who got into the development business as real estate was booming. In final analysis, the lack of a personable disposition and vacuousness of ideas will place a stake through the heart of the Donald Trump campaign.

Alexander Hamilton chose to support Thomas Jefferson over Aaron Burr, although he detested both of them. He foresaw that Burr was not a true patriot, and that in spite of the rhetoric to the contrary, Jefferson would not bring the guillotine to American shores. Hamilton made the best choice he could in a terrible situation, and helped to save the Republic by so doing. Washington placed his trust in the widely disliked, philandering big-mouthed New Yorker, Alexander Hamilton, because Washington understood that patriotism and competence were more important than an undesirable personality. Indeed, what is past is prologue.

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