

## ***So What's Wrong With Old Guys?***

A lot of the debate in the political arena today is about the old guys who either are president or want to be president. If I hear one more time that our next president is likely to be either Biden or Trump, and that their chief “deficiency” is their age, well I just may do something desperate. While I am not as old as either one of those characters, just what is wrong with old age other than medical infirmities and being sent off on an iceberg by our kids?

My mother made it past 102 and if you sat down and talked with her at any time during her life, she bragged not about her children or her spouse, but about her business achievements starting with being the first woman comptroller at Revlon in 1940, up through running her engineering business. She sold the engineering business in her early 80s but refused to retire. She wound up managing the small office building owned by one of her friends, where she had her own office.

My father did not make it nearly as long as my mother did, but he worked until the last week of his life, albeit on a somewhat part-time basis. He probably spent more time working on his community activities than making money, but he did both to the best of his ability.

As a result of being born to older parents, by the time I was a teenager it seemed like everyone in my family was well aged. I grew up with older people and learned to love them. They may have been senior in years, but they all had sharp minds, with wits to match.

It is about time we stood up for old politicians! If the reader of this column was able to watch Donald Trump at the Republican Townhall Meeting in Manchester, Vermont, he was without question on his game. The guy, sane or not, handled the interviewer in a convivial, aggressive, and competent fashion. Putting aside Donald Trump's obvious deficits and lack of respect for law and order, unless it suits his own particular constituency, he certainly does not seem unable to function based upon his age, weight, hair color, or cholesterol levels. The former president may deny the legitimacy of any election he does not win, but that is as much a function of his DNA and how he is wired neuropsychologically and has little to do with his age.

As for President Biden, his enemies love to picture him as a bumbling old fool who can barely walk, salute, or even utter an articulate sentence. Nevertheless, anyone who watched President Biden when he talked about the Democratic position on the budget deficit and the looming crisis over the debt ceiling, had to admit that he was not only testy and sharp but also clearly interested in making a deal. While it was Donald Trump who wrote the Art of the Deal, it is Joe Biden who has been making deals for well over 50 years.

For years, people complained that those getting elected to public office had no experience and that was the problem with our elected officials. Trump has experience in business and Biden has experience in politics. Both have life experience far beyond anyone else who will run for the high office of President of the United States. It is easy to criticize both men for their failings, but whether they should be disqualified from office because of their age is a different question.

Joe Biden will make a deal with the Republican House on the budget, deficits, and the debt ceiling. He will do so because he believes in making deals, and knows that it is the only way for the country to survive and for him to be successful as a politician. Kevin McCarthy knows the same thing. He understands that without a deal, he cannot survive as a politician and the country will quickly disintegrate into the morbid abyss of financial disintegration.

Does all this mean that we should look for more 80 year olds to serve in public office? Maybe. There are lots of old people hanging around who know how to teach, want to work, and have a lot to offer to the young whippersnappers who talk a lot and know little. I say hooray for old politicians and any other elderly person who wants to contribute to the betterment of society. We may not agree with what they think or even how they behave, but how are they any worse than young lunatics who populate our government, leading us down the path of negativity and inadequate solutions to stubborn problems.

Perhaps the Art of the Deal Biden can work on securing the border and saving entitlement programs without bankrupting the country or taxing the dickens out of hardworking Americans. Reading American history one cannot help but appreciate that deals have been made since the founding of this Republic. The “great compromise” leading to the establishment of our current constitution in 1789 was to create a House of Representatives based on population and a Senate based upon every state having equality. Without that deal being cut, we would not have the United States of America as we know it today. Many other countries, including the state of Nebraska, have unicameral legislatures.

Sure enough when one party has complete control, there are less likely to be deals and more mischief to be made for the public. Clearly, the super majorities that Franklin Roosevelt enjoyed helped to create a nation where the bureaucracy has essentially been ruled by one party for many years. One party rule is never a good thing for any nation. The Russian invasion of Ukraine would not still be going on if Russian had any semblance of Democracy, but unfortunately that is not the case and is unlikely ever to happen in our lifetimes.

Joe Biden, if looked at fairly, has done a reasonably good job of ignoring the far left wing of his party. We will see how he addresses the question of reparations for those enslaved, while ignoring a host of other social problems which justifiably need to be addressed. Perhaps Donald Trump, hardly likely to happen, will likewise learn to compromise with those in his own party by rejecting extremism and embracing the more

moderate members of his own party. It will be for Donald Trump the only way that he can survive politically. For the former president to stand up before CNN cameras and defend the January 6<sup>th</sup> rioters just will not pass muster in this country.

So, think about the elderly people you know and how useful they can be other than rocking your children and grandchildren on their laps and uttering old stories that no one listens to. Perhaps we should search out the great talent residing in our senior population and eliminate the discrimination against that group of American citizens.

*Clifford A. Rieders, Esquire  
Rieders, Travis, Dohrmann, Mowrey  
Humphrey & Waters  
161 West Third Street  
Williamsport, PA 17701  
(570) 323-8711 (telephone)  
(570) 323-4192 (facsimile)*

*Cliff Rieders is a Board-Certified Trial Advocate in Williamsport, is Past President of the Pennsylvania Trial Lawyers Association and a past member of the Pennsylvania Patient Safety Authority. None of the opinions expressed necessarily represent the views of these organizations.*