

VOICE FOR THE COMMON GOOD

campaign to end gridlock

Rev. Don Burton

Some years ago I made a presentation on the topic: ["My Political Analysis of the World As It Is."](#) I have been thinking about the final question of that presentation:

"In the end, "My Political Analysis of the World as It Is," is a question about power. ***Whose power do our legislators fear more:*** The lobbyists, their funders, their political party, another branch of government, or *the American citizen who votes? The answer is up to us!*"

How are we to have impact? Mollie and Kevin answer by demanding: **"GOVERNANCE NOT GRIDLOCK!"** *We are asking people to join us in electing members of congress who will govern by enacting long term, bipartisan solutions to the problems of the American people. Gridlock will continue unless we demand members of congress to learn compromise for the common good.*

So where do we start?

The list of issues a majority of the American people want solved, keeps growing.

62% - environment

71% - economy

60% - education

62% - healthcare

80% - safety

91% - incarceration

73% - immigration

67% - voting

The pandemic has revealed how RACE and INEQUALITY make everything disproportionately more difficult for people of color and the poor. Is change possible? It appears that nearly 70% of people, or more, believe it is time that our culture addresses systemic racism and inequality. Imagine how our lives could change for the better if congress enacted long-term bi-partisan solutions to these issues! Especially for the poor and people of color.

The people we elect are given the high privilege of representing us. *They are to enact legislation that solves our problems! When our members of congress fail to act, the only sure way to change this is WITH OUR VOTES!*

The problems our country needs to solve are beyond the action of one person or one party. **We need bi-partisan legislation.** Bi-partisan laws create lasting solutions for the people of our country. **"VOICE FOR THE COMMON GOOD" challenges voters to fire members of congress who fail to act for the common good.**

THE STORY OF THE 21ST CENTURY AMERICA WILL BE ABOUT THE SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF OUR CIVIC PARTICIPATION.

The idea that voters can and must fire representatives who are not acting in a bi-partisan way for the common good is in the public political narrative today. The idea that a GRIDLOCKING REPRESENTATIVE could be FIRED was not part of the political narrative just two or three years ago. All kinds of people are talking about this possibility today!

We are being challenged to decide and affirm the kind of people we want to be. As citizens we are challenged to decide the kind of country we want to be. No major institution that supports our lives can escape deciding what they must be and do. What is a family and what must it do? What is our vocation (work)? What must we do to support people in their work? **Few areas of our lives including our religious community, our family, and our vocations escape the consequences of decisions made by our government. DO NOT FORGET: WE ARE THE GOVERNMENT!**

Therefore, civic participation is CRITICALLY important. We must help one another create good government. We can no longer allow one another to sit on the sidelines. We get the government we vote into office. **Being lazy** (not doing our homework), **being careless** (not knowing how our political system works) or **being stupid** (thinking that we are too busy to vote or that our vote does not count) will not deliver the governance we need! **Civic participation involves nurturing a web of relationships with one another and with those we elect to represent us.** Through these relationships we can build a strong democracy that creates and sustains the common good for all.

Our Civic Participation is greatly influenced by our stories including our experience with America's original sin of racism. Perhaps what is required these days is more storytelling and less speaking of our political and/or religious solutions. When we encounter anger as we tell our stories, we need to find out why. Our culture needs conversations that lead to understanding and solutions enacted into law. Having several strategies to speak with those who disagree with us is important. *Behind the anger we so often encounter could be a solution our country needs.* Voice for the Common Good accepts the reality that asking political or religious questions can cause your family or friends to label you a 'TROUBLEMAKER!' **Even so, our country needs STRATIGISTS maybe even TROUBLEMAKERS! The stakes are extremely high!**

VOICE FOR THE COMMON GOOD participants act in five ways:

Be a Practicing Citizen!

Tell us and people around you that civic participation is important to you. Tell us how you are informing yourself for responsible civic participation. We need to hold one another accountable for our stewardship of government! **Be a Practicing Citizen!**

Confirm your voter registration.

Make sure that you are registered. Learn the ways you can vote in your state. Make sure you have done what is required to act on your choice. Make sure you know where your polling place is located. Use a site like [USAgov](https://www.usagov.gov) to learn about the rules for your state.

Tell your representatives you are expecting bi-partisan solutions NOW!

[This link will get contact information for those who represent you.](#) The web of relationships that sustains strong civic participation is multi-layered. It begins at the local level with the school board, with the town or city government, with the county, then the state and Federal government. Our civic participation page contains other tools to inform ourselves about the work of those who represent us. You can use the list of **American Majority Issues** above to assess the records of those who represent you.

INVITE FAMILY/FRIENDS/ORGANIZATIONS/INSTITUTIONS TO JOIN US!

We are asking people to communicate **our simple message:** *"We are sick and tired of Gridlock at all levels of government. We will fire representatives who are not governing to solve our problems with lasting bi-partisan solutions."*

TURN OUT THE VOTE IN NOVEMBER!

40% of eligible voters (over 90 million) did not vote in 2016. The election was decided by 107,000 votes. Turnout is important. Our country needs **troublemakers** right now. We need people who pester others until they show up to vote. We need to be vigilant about take making certain that the registration and voting processes in our area are clear and fair. **WE WILL GET THE GOVERNMENT WE VOTE INTO POWER!**