

Community Comment  
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## Stability

America, the United States, has been incredibly successful. For two hundred plus years, our country has been through a number of crises most of which would have brought down other nations. We have been strong and resilient through natural disasters, economic downturns, wars[ including a civil war] , political scandal, terrorism, and extreme environmental damage. We have had great leaders and poor ones. We have met challenges with political skill, sacrifice and hard work, technical invention and innovation, and a spirit of cooperation.

Why have we been successful so far? It's not dumb luck. It's not that we are smarter than everyone else and it's not that we are bigger or stronger than everyone else. The answer is somewhat built into our founding principles of governance. It's not specific in any one section of our constitution or amendments. And, like the ten commandments, it's not any one thing; instead it's how we read the intent.

I've not seen any religious document or government policy that states this concept in so many words. But ideas that have lasted a long time have this concept in common; at least in how they have played out over time. The concept is stability.

The American form of a representative democracy instills in it the ability to adapt and adjust to changing conditions. But the rate of change is controlled by our elective process. We ask the men and women who become our representatives to represent our interests but to vote their conscience. We want them to be honest with us but we also know they will have more information about many issues than we will have. We all know, but don't like to admit it, that every issue is not by nature black or white. On a scale of one to a hundred, many votes fall closer to fifty percent than we think. The few that are 90 or 10 percent, one way or the other are the easy ones. This is not just true in Washington but in our local cities and counties as well. Most issues can be argued on both sides, but at some point a vote must be taken and a decision made.

Change happens more slowly and in a more controlled way in the public policy arena than most of us like; but this is also our strength. It make us stable. Most people who run for elective office get this.

To say it is disturbing to me to have our federal government threatened with another shut down is an understatement. This is the last thing we need as our economy is finally coming out of this recession. We were seriously jarred by the horrific acts of 9-11. But our reaction was knee jerk and irresponsible. It felt good but further destabilized us. We acted differently than in our history and we have paid for that.

Now, we need to work together and cooperate on issues of importance. We need to leave the ideology at the door and work for us. Politicians advance their ideology, statesmen advance their country, their state, their county or their city. We need to remember we are all of one party; American.

This has been Sam Pennisi for community comment.