

Community Comment
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The State Of the Union

I watched with interest the State Of The Union speech on Tuesday. I almost always do. I'm a political junkie of sorts. I like to know what our representatives in Washington and Sacramento have to say about the current conditions we face. I have learned over the years to always consider the source but their take is important to know. You all know that I am a democrat and probably will always be one. But my party affiliation is based on pretty broad principles. I seriously look at the candidate of any party at every election. Most of the time I support the democrat. But often it's because he or she best represents my point of view. I seldom agree with every position taken. It's not the lesser of two or more evils; I respect people who are willing to run for public office and few of them prove to be evil. For me, it's who can best do the kind of work needed for the time and work most effectively with the other representatives. I'm more of a pragmatist than an ideologue. I want to see solutions to problems than legislation that enforces ideology.

I agreed with most of what the President had to offer the other night. It's interesting to me how much mythology enters into politics. Two points on this!

One, the myth that we can cut our way out of a recession. Check your history. No country has ever cut their way to prosperity. A society has to invest in itself to create opportunity. The way we dug ourselves out of the great depression is our best example. Greece demonstrates the opposite approach. In a country where it can be argued that the middle class is what makes us both strong and stable, we need policies that support the working public. It is clear to me that we have not made the policy connection to encourage job growth. In fact we have given jobs away to other countries. I firmly believe that our country, in fact every country should do all they can to have a strong economic base in segments that ensure self reliance. Self reliant countries are far less likely to need the resources of other countries and conflict is more easily avoided.

Two, the myth that raising wages or the minimum wage will lead to job loss and economic downturns. Again, history shows this is not the case. More and more economists are finding this to be so. But the myth is still repeated.

The fact is that both sides of an issue have myths, facts, and half-truths associated with them. In our type of majority rule, representative democracy, compromises will be the way to acceptable solutions to our most pressing problems. A compromise is almost never the best technical solution to anything; but it moves us along towards a workable solution. Democracy is messy and tedious but both players need to be willing to engage the other to succeed. We need this work ethic in Washington in the worst way.

Let me close with the highlight of the speech for me. It came near the end when the President said we are finally going to get off a war footing in this country. We are ending our longest war. It's way over due.

It's past time to invest in our future again.

This has been Sam pennisi for community comment.