

April 28, 2015

This is Erin Dunn of the Fortuna Chamber of Commerce with a Community Comment.

Am I alone in my utter frustration that the 2016 Presidential campaigning has already started? The rhetoric has ratcheted up to a level that is usually reserved for 12 months out from the election—not 20 months out!

How many Republicans are running for President right now? Jeb Bushed quipped at least 55. And they are being forced early in the process to raise the conservative bar with each appearance. They are in an awkward spot of having to puff up their respective chests and try to out-conservative each other. Because it's started so early, I can't even imagine what outrageous statements the candidates will be forced to make come September. I wonder what the political landscape would look like if the early campaigning had to start in California—maybe not so kooky.

Republicans have created a sticky campaign strategy. They can't get elected in the primaries unless they come off as the farthest right candidate. It makes it tough to win a general election when you've had to make ultra conservative declarations in the primaries.

President Obama had a good zinger at the annual white house correspondence dinner this last weekend after the Republican candidates were asked if they would attend a gay wedding—see, I'm telling you, the crazy is starting early! He said: On former Pennsylvania Sen. Rick Santorum's declaration that he would not attend a gay wedding if invited: "Gays and lesbians across the country responded, 'That's not going to be a problem.'"

I was relieved to hear on Wait Wait Don' Tell Me this weekend that host Peter Sagal also thinks the campaigning has started way too early!

He said the many candidates at the recent First National Forum in New Hampshire didn't make a crowd, "it was a junk drawer of presidential candidates." Everyone has come out of the woodwork early!

The Democrats have the opposite problem. With only one candidate so far declared and other potential candidates being coy, Hillary Clinton is the only candidate on whom the competition can focus their attacks—they have smelled blood in the water and they are circling and coming in for the kill. Hillary created her own set of problems that caused the feeding frenzy. Those Democrats who are thinking of declaring later are playing it well so far—let the Hillary fatigue set in, let the Republicans implode, and THEN declare. That strategy will be good for, oh, about one day.

It all shakes out in the end. The problem tends to be though, when we start this early with the crazy talk, voters start to feel that the only choice is the lesser of two evils. That neither candidate by November 2016 seems viable. The two sides will have attacked below the belt for so long that we stop thinking either candidate is very good.

My strategy right now is to turn the channel when either political party hits the air waves. I will start paying attention in January.

This has been Erin Dunn with a community comment.