

Community Comment  
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### A civics lesson

Last week we witnessed the Republican National Convention. This week, we saw the Democrats gather for theirs. These events are not just a show that is televised but are a critical part of our republican democracy. Over the years, we have established a two party system of governing. You may or may not like the system, but it is what we have to work with. One of many reasons a third party candidate is almost never successful at the federal level is that he or she lacks support from the main stream of our political approach. When we gather as parties, we are able to build a coalition of like minded individuals that can come together and agree on certain principles and policies. This offers more of an opportunity to have platforms and policies that have broad appeal to a majority of the electorate. This, in turn, allows the voter to choose a party that mostly fits their ideas and ideology. For most of us, one of the two parties satisfies us enough that we can generally support the ticket or individual running.

The two party system also allows for the debate of policies that might solve a problem or issue and come to a compromise resolution. This is important especially when the country is nearly split down the middle on many key issues. It means extreme laws are less likely to be passed. It means extreme change will likely take longer to happen. I would argue that this is a good thing. Over these two hundred and forty years, one thing that has been of great value to our success is our political stability.

Stability and slow change encourages rational economic growth. Think of the personal and cultural chaos that would happen if federal law changed as often as Apple introduces a new phone. The uncertainty would make job longevity and investment opportunities a thing of the past. Not only would families not be able to plan for a future, but neither could the state or the country. Even our allies would not know what to expect from us. Our enemies would take full advantage of this prospect.

Any one of us might be frustrated with the lack of positive action on important issues over the past few years. That is not due to the system. This is a choice by our elected representatives. This election year, we have seen both parties struggle with the extreme of their party. The Republican party nomination has been won by Donald Trump. He is hardly a part of the traditional wing of the modern Republican Party. The Democrats saw a strong challenge from Bernie Sanders, who is way to the left of most Democrats. Hillary Clinton won with a strong showing of votes and delegates to win the nomination but everyone was surprised by the strength of his support. This means both parties have platforms shaping the Presidential Election than was unexpected.

One of these candidates will win in November and the country will have a better idea of the policies and solutions that most of desire. In the end, it is not just the about the

character running but also the manner in which they would govern and the ideas they put forth.

It is up to all of us to seriously consider the choice.

This has been Sam Pennisi for community comment.