

Community Comment
November 4th, 2016
Sam Pennisi

On Voting

The Founders of this great experiment in representative democracy deliberated in the swamp of Washington D.C. It was hot and sticky and they wore wool suits. They created new views of the workings of government and borrowed from those attempts they could draw from. They argued and compromised. They were frustrated and angry with the thought of letting go of principles they held dear. They fought for their own ideas and for the promise of creating a new country. They wanted to fix what they lived under and take a chance on a government run for and by the people who were being governed.

The Constitution that they crafted is nothing short of brilliant. It is groundbreaking and it is simple. It is raw and brief in language and incredibly detailed. It is both a statement of Philosophy and a practical guide for establishing a government.

The Preamble to the Constitution states the following:

We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for The United States of America.

From here, this document set up a government in practical terms and details. A provision for Amendments to this document was included and various amendments were added over time. On such amendment was adopted to address the right to vote; it simply states that 'The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.' Such a simple statement and such an elegant gift we gave ourselves; the right to vote.

The right to vote is our practical application of our liberty. Each one of us has a say in who will represent us in our government. The who indicates the policies we decide best represents our interests and desires. By this act of voting, we express our expectations for solving current issues and we create our future by laying a foundation. We can certainly change course, but we envision a future by our actions in the present.

It is no overstatement that men and women have fought and died for the right to hold tight to self government. Part of the social contract we must keep is that we are a country of laws and majority rule. If we are unwilling to accept the result of a fair and accurate election, then we violate that social contract. Our country cannot survive if we violate the contract. We fought a Civil War in part to keep these United States together under the Constitution.

We vote next Tuesday. We have had weeks to register and get mail-in ballots. The polls open before most workdays start and close after most work days end. Even with the road blocks, real and imagined, we must study the issues and the candidates and cast our vote. It is after all, not only our right, it is also our privilege. Our vote is our buy-in to the future of our country.

This has been Sam Pennisi for community comment.