

# Holding our noses at election time says just as much about us as them

It has been labeled as the most exclusive club in the world.

It has just 100 members, but it has long been viewed as a “gentlemen’s club,” ruled by a small inner circle of skilled legislators who pay lip service to the notion that each member is “one among 100 equals,” even if that was the ideal upon which the citadel of power was established.

The “club,” of course, is the U.S. Senate, which was created by the Founding Fathers as a legislative chamber based on equal representation among the states.

That sense of equality, however, has been more myth than reality, according to political observers, who view the Senate as an “anti-democratic counterweight” to the House of Representatives, which historians have long seen as more in tune with the citizenry it represents.

On December 6, in a state race for a U.S. Senate seat that generated national buzz, Georgia voters went to the polls in droves, narrowly electing Democratic incumbent Raphael Warnock over Republican challenger Herschel Walker, perhaps the most ill-equipped candidate to ever run for a coveted 6-year term in the Senate.

Walker, a former NFL and college football star who won the Heisman Trophy in 1982 while at the University of Georgia, carried so much political baggage as a candidate that voters may have mistaken him for a mile-long freight train filled to the brim with half-baked products.

It started with the claim that he had a university degree, when, in fact, he

didn’t. Walker also boasted that he was valedictorian of his high school class, which he wasn’t except in his own fanciful mind. His claim to scholarly success came before he confessed to Georgians, “I’m not that smart” while seeking their vote. His candor in that regard was indeed telling, just as his fascination on the campaign trail with such hot-button issues as werewolves and vampires.

Then there were the small matters of previously undisclosed children that he had fathered, repeated accusations of domestic violence, false claims that he served in the military, and abortions that he had reportedly urged romantic partners to get as the byproducts of his infidelities.

And despite all these severe shortcomings, Walker still garnered nearly 49 percent of the vote, which should serve as a cautionary tale about the sad state of American politics, where candidates who consider the deadly insurrection at the Capitol as a “legitimate protest” stand arm-in-arm with white supremacists and avowed anti-Semites.

The trouble with this political picture is that some of those candidates will soon be sworn into office, joining the likes of Marjorie Taylor Greene, Matt Gaetz, and Jim Jordan in promoting an alternative reality that hijacks the truth at every turn.

In a number of races, both at the primary and general election levels, voters were forced to hold their nose when they journeyed to the polls, due to the stench that candidates created over the course of their campaigns for



public office. In such races, voters were afforded the opportunity to pick the lesser of two evils, which, in effect, was no choice at all.

Why does this keep happening?

Certainly, part of the reason can be traced to the flood of “dark money” that makes its way into political campaigns, thanks in large part to the 2010 Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission decision by the United States Supreme Court that served as the gateway for special interest groups to buy their way into the hearts of federal and state office-seekers.

Currying legislative favor with money – and assorted other “gifts” and travel perks – is nothing new, but it was taken to an entirely different level during an earlier presidential administration when avarice became an accepted artform.

The smell from those years still lingers, as does the willingness of some political leaders to contort themselves to convoluted support for deeply flawed candidates simply out of political partisanship, most recently displayed by the Republican Party’s full-throated

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support for a Senate candidate riddled with glaring evidence of hypocrisy. Sadly, parties have determined that the vast majority of voters will plug their nose and vote for an unworthy candidate rather than opt for the other side.

Stopping such “negative partisanship” is one of the goals of the new Primerus™ Foundation, which is being launched to encourage our society to choose character over political expediency.

It is our attempt to identify candidates from both parties who believe that honesty and integrity still matter, and that there is a place in our political dialect for such words as “compromise” and “cooperation.”

It is a world we long to see, and in the process, it figures to say just as much about our character as those we hope will be chosen to lead.

Best regards,

**Jack Buchanan, President**