

Guest Post: Election Results- The Next Ten Years

Originally posted by Mark
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<http://currentmatters.markorton.com/2016/11/election-results-the-next-ten-years/>
on November 9, 2016

– The Morning
After –



The election of Trump and the continued Republican control of both Congress and Senate guarantee that the rich will continue to get richer at the expense of the shrinking middle class and further aggravate conditions for the poor. Trickle down economics and tax subsidies will flow for the rich and corporations. The financial sector will buy its way out of the weak regulations of Dodd/Frank and lurch towards new adventures in gambling; a financial disaster will once again require the socialization of their risk at taxpayer expense.

Our infrastructure will accelerate its decline. Think bridges closed and falling down; airports with bigger delays; transit systems overcrowded and unreliable. Immigrants will be plagued if not deported. Xenophobia will be fanned regularly with extra dollops of religious persecution tossed on like whipped cream. Women, particularly poor women, will find it more difficult to access abortion and reproductive healthcare services; an outright ban could be in place by the end of the period.

Our healthcare sector will take an ever larger portion of our incomes to deliver absolutely developing world results; currently we are 34th in longevity and 38th in infant mortality despite spending more than twice per capita compared to our developed country cohort; the portion of the population without health insurance will rise as the Republicans further cripple if not eliminate the failing Obamacare.

The US military and our empire overseas will continue to consume more resources than all of our enemies and allies combined; the domestic security apparatus, already fattened by 9/11 hysteria, will become more costly, intrusive, and oppressive, especially to minorities and political activists.

All of this will happen in the name of free markets and the withering away of the state. This is, after all, what conservatives mean by "small government".

All of this is virtually guaranteed by the stranglehold Republicans have on 30 state legislatures and the gerrymandering tools available to assure that they will run from safe seats in election after election. The results are already in on this strategy and barring some seismic shift this fix will be in when the next decennial redistricting follows the 2020 census.

Looking to the Democratic Party to be a countervailing force is not encouraging. They have been unable, perhaps more

accurately unwilling, to mount an effective rallying of the majority of the poor and middle class to programs to serve their interests. They remain largely in the thrall of the same free market policies that brought Bill Clinton to power and they continue to largely mimic the free market policies of the Republicans. Clinton famously declared that “the era of big government is over” in his 1996 State of the Union. Clinton signed the Republican authored “reform” bill Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 to “end welfare as we have come to know it”. In 1999, Clinton signed several laws deregulating the financial sector; these lead directly to the mini-depression (the so-called Great Recession) of 2009 – 2015.

These are capstone events in a twenty year transformation of Democratic policy from representing at least some of the interests of the poor and middle class to largely being competitors to the Republicans for money from the rich and corporations. Democrats have not put forth a program of government action to fight for and protect the interests of the poor and middle class for decades. This is most obviously noted in their appointment of Wall St. insiders to all of the important economic management jobs in the Clinton and Obama administrations. Neither administration was able, or even sought, to face down the healthcare industry. Its share of our national income goes up every year while producing reprehensible results. Though Obamacare brought millions of people into the healthcare tent, it is now failing because it is unable to control the costs of the most expensive and least productive healthcare system in the world.

The Democrats also failed to alter US foreign policy, continuing the militaristic approach that has brought us disastrously costly wars with equally disastrous results in Iraq and Afghanistan. Nor have the Democrats ended America’s longest war, the War on Drugs, started by the race baiting Richard Nixon over 40 years ago. Hundreds of thousands of

lives have been lost or ruined by the so-called justice system while the drug industry continues to produce profits on a global scale. Nothing like persisting in a policy that has only reinforced the positions of the drug producers and distributors.

Bernie Sanders' campaign showed that it is possible to mobilize people around their own economic and social interests. The question at the moment is where is the party that can take up this quest and conduct the long campaign necessary to overcome the political and institutional barriers over the next ten years.

Of course, given the instability of the capitalist system and the likelihood that its speculative risk taking behaviors are not under sufficient control (around the world, not just in the US) to prevent another even worse financial disaster, an upheaval of broad social disorder could easily occur. In that case, we will most likely see that the rich and corporate interests will deploy fascist solutions to remain in power. There simply are no popular political parties or forces that can compete with them.

BTW – I think I would have written substantially the same commentary if Hillary Clinton had won the election. She would have clearly had better policy positions on many social issues, but she would have faced the same situation in the Federal and state legislatures. Her economic policies, even should she really abandon her connections with Wall St. money, would be thwarted in Congress. Her track record on foreign policy, the military, and domestic security has not been encouraging of a shift to a less militarist interventionist approach.

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