

US Elections Divide and Rule

Author: Lokesh Kumar

August 6, 2018

When I entered US politics as candidate for the congressional seat in my district, I was astonished to find party operatives were trying everything possible to have me pull out of the race. I was not a party operative, challenging a long-term political family, and posed a danger to the delicate balance of pay to play culture. I quickly realized that under the pleasantries of US daily life lurks a divisive political culture of our society. The under belly of US politics is as dysfunctional as any Jerry Springer TV show.



It comes as no surprise now. What I have discovered is that the two major political parties are covers of the same book. Read further into the book, and you quickly realize, that the American electorate is being divided daily so each can continue to rule. They have now gone to extremes to polarize the electorate with key issues so there is no chance their share of the electorate will shift to the other side. Whether it was by design or the result of a one up game, it has definitely scarred the fabric of American society. There is constant use of trigger words and hyping up the rhetoric on meaningless issues that will never see the light of day in Congress. Yet these appear front and center stage at all meetings, socials, conversations, and advertisements. Here are a few.

Protect the second amendment: The right to bear arms is now part of the constitution. It has already been confirmed in the Supreme Court. Despite this, interest groups work up people on both sides until blood rushes to their head, and logic goes out the window. It would require a two-thirds majority in Congress to overturn it, and a willing president to sign it. For congresses that are balanced on 1 or 2 votes just to pass basic bills, this feat would be comparable to sending a freight train to Mars. Basically, it isn't happening in our lifetimes. Yet it is the most commonly used issue.

Right to life: The right to life issue is being used by Republicans and Democrats alike to seriously divide our society. It is admirable to believe in what is front and center to one's upbringing. But government has no place in people's personal lives. Both sides keep re-affirming this issue to guard their core vote banks.

Build walls around America vs. Open borders: Do you see the difference here? The views are so extreme that neither will ever be accomplished. Yet this is headline news every day. Politicians keep churning the pot and psyching up their base in the hopes of adding more their half.

Recreational marijuana vs. no smoking at all, protect our waters, stop pipelines: These are tactics of no substance, designed to reinforce the divide, and expand the base. Interest groups dig deep to find divisive issues like these, sell them to the parties, and rake in all the money that goes with marketing them.

Free healthcare for all vs. healthcare for none, de-fund social security vs. protect social security. The end product is not to pass the issue one way or other. It is to keep the issue simmering, creating a vote bank, and relentlessly profiting from marketing it.

Politicians no longer have to work. All they have to do is master these talking points, take sides, and nothing can possibly happen to them. It is okay if people get disgusted with politics and tune out. Statistically, equal numbers will tune out on both sides, and we will have status quo. For politicians, a divided Congress that does nothing is the best thing since sliced bread. Gone are the days when someone said "a divided house will fall".

Insights into American politics by Lokesh Kumar detail his experiences as a federal congressional candidate on the campaign trail. In this article, the author talks about how his views were shaped by visiting people door to door and asking them what were their most important issues, and how to fix them.

Register on our website lokeshkumar.org, to get on our mailing list for more insights into our government.