

DEMOCRACY: IT'S WORTH THE WAIT

A Citizen Call for Candidates to Respect the Vote Counting Process

Premature Concessions or Claims of Victory are an Insult to Democracy ALL BALLOTS MUST BE COUNTED BEFORE A VICTOR IS DECLARED

Candidates have no right to concede a race (or claim victory) if votes remain uncounted if recounts are being called for, if allegations of election misconduct exist. Elections are not personal contests between the individual candidates. They are the only basis for legitimate transfer of power in our government, based upon the Will of the People. It is the votes that determine the winner, not the candidates. Therefore candidates have no right to short circuit the process, but have a duty to the voters to respect it.

Shaken Confidence & Illegitimate Results:

Since 2000, the American public has become painfully aware of the damaged and shaky condition of our election process. Over the past six years, elections across the nation have produced outcomes that many Americans suspect are illegitimate. From Presidential elections to local elections, American voters have lost faith that their precious votes will be counted as cast. They question whether the election outcomes are truly reflecting the Will of the People.

History of Devastating Concessions: Will of the People Ignored

In 2000, many Americans watched in dismay as no U.S. Senator would join with the Congressional Black Caucus to challenge the electors in Florida that emerged from a chaotic and aborted election. Apparently some Senators who might have stood with them were persuaded by Senator (and Presidential candidate) Al Gore not to do so. In 2004, Senator (and Presidential candidate) John Kerry conceded the race in the deciding state of Ohio before the vote count was complete and long before recounts and challenges would be decided. His concession came despite his later statement that "There are very troubling questions that have not yet been answered by Ohio election officials". Despite Kerry's available funds and lawyers, it took concerned citizens and third party candidates to actually mount a campaign for a recount in Ohio. More recently we had the 2006 election in California's HD 50, where election integrity was compromised when election workers took voting machines home for "sleepovers" in the weeks before the election. This flawed election went unchallenged by the "losing" candidate and by her political party. Once again, citizen activists mounted the challenge to the election's integrity and outcome.

Demoralizing Effect of Candidate Concessions:

Concerned citizens who challenge suspect election outcomes have too often found themselves brushed aside with the statement that "The candidate already conceded. Why are you upset?". While Al Gore and John Kerry are the two most high profile candidates to break trust with the voters, candidates at all levels of government need to understand that they are expected to commit themselves to ensuring that elections reflect the Will of the People.

Take Action:

Candidates must stand up to the political "schoolyard bullies" who will taunt them with cries of "Sore Loser". They must put aside their concerns about possible future political comebacks. They must put the voters, the country, and the integrity of our elections first! **As a candidate, please commit to respect the integrity of the election process and wait to claim victory or concede defeat until ALL the votes are counted.**