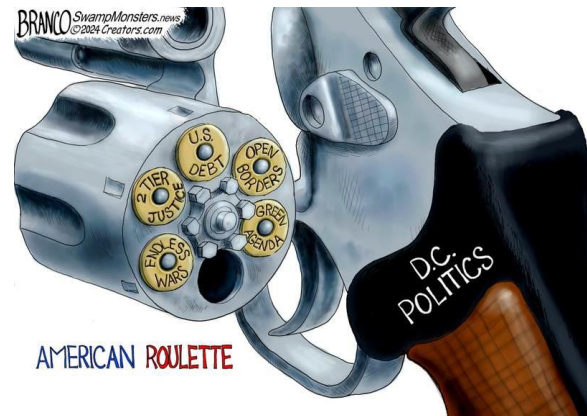


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What ideals are we fighting for?

Steve Bakke  February 2, 2023



"It is futile to fight against, if one does not know what one is fighting for." – Ayn Rand

As we stumble into this presidential election year, our tradition of civil political discourse has been replaced by vicious attacks and virtually no bipartisan agreement.

I'm convinced this polarization results from a collision of a few divisive politicians. Encouraging me in this conclusion is Ayn Rand's suggestion, quoted above, that the futility of modern conflict reflects individuals having little understanding as to what ideals they stand for, and why. That advice sent me to the keyboard to record a summary of my own policy priorities.

Immigration/border control is a huge concern. According to the House Committee on Homeland Security, over 85% of the 3.2 million FY2023 illegal entry encounters, not including "getaways," were admitted, often given court hearing dates, years out. The current administration has chosen an uncontrolled chaotic "whoops, better chase" approach, completely dismantling the prior administration's goal of creating a more orderly "stop and sort" process, facilitated by a barrier wall, with human and technology driven surveillance. Completing the southwest border wall is essential.

Roe v. Wade has been reversed, sending the responsibility for **abortion legislation** back to the states. Unfortunately, the narrative surrounding this issue is controlled by the futile battle between extremes – "unlimited abortions rights" vs. the "under no circumstances" crowd. However, a solid majority of Americans desire legalized abortions with limitations. It's time to work to achieve general agreement around those parameters.

I'm very concerned with the **gender bending foolishness** of males competing against women in high level sports competition. These males simply need to declare themselves to be female. If this can happen with the hard-fought protections of Title IX legislation, it could happen elsewhere. No one should have permission to "classify being female as an abstract concept." We must stand up for fairness and scientific truth when dealing with Title IX protections and any other aspects of the transgender issue.

Regarding **gun control**, let's stop the futile clawing for immediate answers. Stop trying to pass legislation before the dead are buried. Stop the immediate finger-pointing and blame. Let's set aside the unhelpful feel-good quick solutions. It's time for careful research as to what legislation will work and under what circumstances.

Law enforcement is an example of a sad deterioration of respect for our police and lack of accountability for our actions. It seems the riots during the summer of 2020, after the death of George Floyd

was a turning point. We've a long way to go in gaining back the personnel and financial resources necessary for a return to sanity. Petty criminals have been in charge for way too long.

Election integrity is a cornerstone of our republic. Controls were loosened during COVID and many have not been reestablished. We've got a lot of soul-searching to do regarding voting controls and security so that no future elections actually are affected by our voting security procedures, or lack thereof.

The current "cram down" **energy policy** threatens the soundness of our economic system and national security. Many research studies, reinforced by common sense, led me to conclude that the clean electric infrastructure necessary to support our entire fleet of "planes, trains, and automobiles," can't be accomplished in the near term, and perhaps never. Let's agree that we must never replace any energy source until an affordable and effective alternative is available. Don't forget other aspects of this issue which include energy independence, battery power disadvantages, clean natural gas availability, and advantages of clean nuclear energy.

Regarding **economic policy**, rather than rambling on about tax and spending details, I prefer to highlight the fact that our system for making economic decisions is deeply flawed. America's budget process doesn't currently allow careful analysis of spending, taxing, and borrowing decisions. Our legislators delay the difficult debate process until emergency action is necessary. We're left with an endless series of emergency financial debates strung together with continuing resolutions, and omnibus spending bills. It's high time for old-fashioned scrutiny of all 12 budget categories. Let's focus on the details.

Deciding **America's role in this complex and dangerous world** is a tough assignment. Israel and Taiwan are long-time allies governed by defense agreements. Regarding Ukraine, when it gained its independence, there was an understanding that giving up its nuclear weapons capabilities would come with certain U.S. security "assurances." We should defend our allies and support their defense capabilities. However, there should be no "blank checks," and the relationship should always maintain America's status as an influential partner.

Our policies regarding **Iran's support of worldwide terrorism and its developing nuclear weapons capabilities** is a major existential threat to the entire free world. Handling the situation with kid gloves has got to stop. The prior administration had Iran on the ropes financially due to economic sanctions and refusing to support Obama's nuclear agreement with Iran. But can we ever get back to that point?

That's where I stand in a tiny nutshell.