

# LETTER TO THE EDITOR IRRECONCILABLE DIFFERENCES!

By Stephen L. Bakke  October 24, 2014



## *Here's what provoked me:*

*With some issues, there is no way to achieve “win/win.” Any result which is different from the ideological extremes may not give a satisfying result for either party. In order to be an effective compromise, each party must gain something from the result, be able to brag about it, and come away with some feeling of satisfaction. Can you see how some things just don't lend themselves to that dynamic? – Stefano Bachovich – obscure curmudgeon and wise political pundit – a prolific purveyor of opinions on just about everything – my primary “go to guy.”*

## *Here's my response:*

### **Irreconcilable Differences**

Re: “Never mind your facts; it's my belief and I'm sticking to it!” by Timothy Taylor – October 24. He acknowledges disagreements between Republicans and Democrats, and their inability to reconcile them. Using an academic approach for explanation, Taylor concludes that disagreement is caused by both sides feeling better informed. In other words, since we are more confident in our personal analyses, we are less willing to “listen to the other guy!”

What's wrong with that? Isn't more information and analysis a good thing? No, because Taylor knows better, that's why! While citizens are working harder to be informed and make choices, Taylor and others rely on theoretical explanations to tell us why our efforts have been for naught. He asks us “to examine preexisting biases.” We have “confirmation bias.” “People tend to interpret additional information as additional support for their pre-existing ideas” and should “hold those beliefs with a dose of humility.” Does that mean we are probably wrong so we shouldn't express our conclusions – just do what we are told by the “experts”?

Nowhere does Taylor acknowledge that polarization might result from sincere and legitimate beliefs arising for very good reasons: real cultural changes, new issues, and changing perspectives on old issues. In today's political climate, the issues are different and the economic and cultural environment magnifies the importance of making the RIGHT decision, OR ... NONE AT ALL!

Perhaps the only thing that would satisfy Taylor is if we changed our opinion in spite of our convictions.



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