

 **LETTER TO THE EDITOR**
ELECTIONS ARE
COMING SOON! – There
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By Stephen L. Bakke  July 24, 2014

Here's what provoked me:

As we approach the election season, we owe it to ourselves to make sure we not only reach a decision, but to understand why we make political choices. And we need a process to make sure our choices are consistent with our personal principles and philosophy. Feeling strongly about this subject, I submitted the following to the editor in hopes of getting it published.

Here's my response:

Elections Are Coming Soon! – There are things we should contemplate!

It's almost time to evaluate and decide on candidates and ballot issues! As we do so, we should keep certain concepts in mind. With very few exceptions, our choices will tend to gather around the distant poles of conservatism and progressivism. (I prefer to use those more philosophical terms rather than the purely political "republican" and "democrat.") As we make these choices, we should try to take stock, generally, of where our personal philosophies lie. In order to do so we should understand structures that I believe frame the political decision process.

I believe virtually all issues and political decisions revolve around three "mother issues." They are:

- The definition of equality – opportunity vs. result;
- the role of the government in our lives – nanny state vs. "ask not";
- and the role for the U.S. in the international community – isolation vs. "citizen of the world."

At this point in the "process" we should also recall other guiding lights:

- Maximizing freedom is inconsistent with trying to achieve total equality – both can't exist in the same moment;
- freedom isn't safe – it can be very risky;
- and our beloved tradition of E Pluribus Unum is probably not applicable if we choose to emphasize multiculturalism.

Achieving a grasp of our feelings about these concepts will help define us in terms of which pole we are closest to – i.e. conservative or progressive. It will also point us to decisions most consistent with our personal philosophy.

