

Don't stop thinking about tomorrow

William Jefferson Clinton rolled out his campaign for President with a song about tomorrow. Barack Obama's was "We take care of our own." Donald Trump wanted to "Make America Great Again" with a rousing patriotic melody. Maybe it's time we in New Mexico had our own song to rally New Mexicans around our state and to help heal the political divide. I'm thinking maybe Weird Al Yankovic could pen one for us or possibly Bob Dylan if he's not too busy polishing his Emmys. Too bad Frankie Laine is dead. He could have set our state's song to the tune of *Rawhide*. El Paso had Marty Robbins and his song that made that city famous.

I think I would prefer Robbins as our state's balladeer. His 'Ballad of New Mexico's Greatness' could go something like this... *"Out in the Land of Enchantment we love so, there lived some folks that have fed at our trough. Tall were their words of promising greatness, that no one could doubt that their hearts were true blue, New Mexico True. And then, the dawn over Santa Fe rose, showing the emptiness there. Emptiness there. With hands over hearts they vowed to uplift us, but all that they lifted was coins from our vest."*

You get the picture. I'm no songwriter, but I am a concerned citizen that loves this state, and I'm frankly fed up with New Mexico's leaders' belief in bigger government as the solutions to all our problems. We continue to romanticize our past and convince ourselves that we are *almost there*. Just a few hundred more laws and we're sure to reverse our course and be all that we can be, but we seem to have forgotten our own state motto, *crescit eundo* - 'it grows as it goes' and that goes for the rise of government dominance over the citizenry. New laws won't right-size education, eliminate crime, erase poverty and realize the dreams of our early settlers who came here looking for a little *laissez faire*. Now it's time for us who love New Mexico to face some hard facts.

We're number 49 out of 50 states in education. We have the second highest poverty rate in the nation. Our unemployment rate is the fourth worst in the country. And on crime we're the most dangerous state in the Union. We're overly dependent on 'Uncle Sugar' (the highest dependency state in the USA). We're at the bottom half of the pack (30th) when it comes to the quality of our healthcare, and on competitiveness we're 43rd out of 50 states. Don't believe me? Look it up. I did. It's time we woke up from our *New Mexico True* self-induced PR.

We have been basking in parochialism and patronism for generations. We keep electing re-cycled politicians who are intent on...being elected to new, higher offices without finishing the work already on their desks. Our state sport is running for office. It's exasperating for those of us that subscribe to Einstein's warning: that we shouldn't keep doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.

There are sound reasons we're at the bottom of the good lists and at the top of the bad ones. One of them is, that as a state, we still haven't figured out what we want to be when we grow up. Do we want to be a high-tech Mecca, a major tourism destination, a 'government town' with a hefty Federal footprint? We're deeply politically and ideologically split, and we are demographically divided as well (look at the recent gun law legislation where 26 out of 33 counties' sheriffs said that they won't enforce what they feel is unconstitutional and unenforceable legislation). We spend too much time on trying to celebrate diversity while ignoring the value of unity of purpose and bipartisanship. We also have a mighty big inferiority complex when it comes to our neighbors.

Instead of analyzing what is powering the growth of states like Texas, Utah and Arizona, we prefer to remain - again - *New Mexico True* - whatever that is. We're losing our bright young people to those states because we won't take off our blinders and confront our problems. We can't attract foreign direct investment because our tax structure is onerous, because our crime rate is off the charts and we protect social promotion in our schools and don't teach our children how to write and read, properly. The recently-concluded legislative session passed well over 200 new bills many of which will put us on a path of Democratic Party re-construction - a makeover if you will.

We are bound to see more of the same during the next four years as the cards are stacked against those of us who revere the 'old New Mexico' where a person could find peace in their own little corner of the state, free from government interference. A state song and a few hundred new laws every year is not going to solve our problems. We need a major attitude adjustment.

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