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ABORTION HAS POLARIZED AMERICA

By Steve Bakke  October 16, 2018



Right after the confirmation of Justice Kavanaugh I read that “Kavanaugh's confirmation marked the end of a bitter, protracted partisan battle.....” I’m afraid that’s a pipedream, and there should be no surprise that the battle will rage on. Abortion, as a progressive “sacrament,” is the biggest cause for the bitter Kavanaugh debate – and that battle isn’t going away. And let us not ignore the closely related controversy over the Supreme Court’s exploding importance.

I’m convinced the Kavanaugh “episode” had very little to do with the #MeToo movement. The intense focus on sexual assault during the confirmation circus was a ruse. It provided much needed cover, kind of a stalking horse, for abortion activists, the press, and Democrats in Congress.

The resistance to Kavanaugh had everything to do with Roe v. Wade – no other issue could compare. Without changing anything else, if Judge Kavanaugh had been somehow certified as being pro-abortion, we would never have had to suffer through those painful hearings. There would have been the formality of vigorous debate, but all would have been resolved. When the final vote was taken, there would have been far less drama, and Kavanaugh’s confirmation would have been close but comfortable. Almost by itself, abortion was the poison pill.

The increased importance of the Supreme Court was a secondary factor for igniting the confirmation battle because gradually over recent decades we’ve become less adept at self-governance. Now, when something can’t be accomplished through legislation, political parties or activist groups have learned to look to the Supreme Court to advance their causes. Our senators and representatives have relinquished significant “lawmaking” responsibilities. America’s Founders had no intention that the Supreme Court be the final arbiter on all public affairs, but Roe v. Wade is a prime example of this “legislating from the bench.”

Those trends and factors are largely responsible for the Kavanaugh “circus.” To me it seems our governance system has been turned “upside down” – becoming almost bizarre. Historian Victor Davis Hanson reminds us that we are living George Orwell’s “dystopian” novel, “1984.” “In Orwell’s world of 1984 Oceania, there is no longer a sense of due process, free inquiry, rules of evidence and cross examination, much less a presumption of innocence.”

We are in quite a political mess. Pew Research found political parties now actually fear each other, and consider each other an existential threat. Any conflict such as this has anger, at least threats of violence, and lots of victims. The “destroy Kavanaugh strategy” victims included: Two good people, Kavanaugh and Ford, who were transformed into political pawns and personally damaged seriously; the Supreme Court now faces underserved challenges to its legitimacy; and tragically, the battle against sexual abuse and exploitation suffered a serious set-back.

I’m thankful that a lonely senator could see the whirlwind coming. She knew she would end up being a focus of controversy because she was destined to be the deciding vote. She wanted to meet the challenge the best she could and thoroughly prepared herself for doing so. Senator Susan Collins, a staunch supporter of legal abortions, talked reason and wisdom to the Senate, even though she knew she would create controversy whatever she said. Liking it or not, people listened.

Among other things she stated: “We must always remember that it is when passions are most inflamed that fairness is most in jeopardy. This outlandish allegation was put forth without any credible supporting evidence and simply parroted public statements of other. That such an allegation can find its way into the Supreme Court confirmation process is a stark reminder about why the presumption of innocence is so ingrained in our American consciousness.....It is a case of people bearing ill will towards those who disagree with them.”

Senator Collins understood and verbalized the damage that had been done to both Dr. Ford and Brett Kavanaugh, as well as to the progress already made by #MeToo. She was compassionate and carried out her responsibilities at the same time. We should all be thankful for what Senator Collins did.

I’m afraid that we will suffer this bitter polarization indefinitely unless we somehow some common ground on the abortion controversy. I know it’s there. Nothing else will end the conflict.