

Stirring the political pot in Georgia and DC

I used to like visiting Georgia, especially Savannah. There was something very civilized and genteel about the state and that city, but that was thirty some years ago, during a time when politics wasn't the foremost thing on everybody's mind. Amid the imprint of historical plantations, the oppressive humidity and between sips of mint juleps, Georgia (even Atlanta) was a living example of what post-Civil War civility meant to a modern southern state.

Businesses were flourishing, tourism was on the rise as was the general economy, and the world was beating a path to Georgia's doorstep. Back then, Georgia was a conservative place (at least rural Georgia was). The wounds of racial strife were steadily healing with every passing year and Blacks and Whites were not always at each other's throats. Northerners were welcome as long as they respected the 'Georgia ways' and that meant that transplants shouldn't try to upset the peach cart too much. Georgians were capable of running their own state, thank you very much.

Atlanta got its first Black mayor in 1974, Maynard Jackson, Jr., and he served three terms (1974-82 and again 1990-94). Later, in 2001, Atlantans elected Shirley Franklin, a Black woman, to be their mayor. In fact, the Black population of Georgia has steadily grown and is now over 32% and can count among its current and former prominent citizens the likes of Jackie Robinson, Andrew Young, Harriet Tubman and many others. It also has radical political activists like Stacy Abrams. The state has a population of nearly 11 million. It grew by 100,000 souls in just one year from 2018-2019 and it has attracted a new wave of transplants, many coming from high-tax states like New York, New Jersey, Illinois and as far west as California.

Atlanta has long been known as the 'city of transplants' with nearly 40% of population having been born someplace else. The farther you go from the city center the more 'native' the population becomes. To the south of Atlanta, in the city of Spalding, for example, the non-native population is estimated to be at over 75%!

The bad news for us Conservatives is that many of those new Georgians are bringing their Democratic politics with them. Georgia ranked as the top fifth state to welcome the most newcomers in 2019 (according to a U.S. Census Bureau report). While more than 50,000 people came from abroad, thousands relocated from other states that also include Florida, Texas and as I mentioned, high-tax states like California and New York.

Many point to the state's turnaround to elect Joe Biden as a result of three things: the influx of Democrat transplants, the Black woman vote and increases in overall voter registration. Demographers and political pollsters are still trying to figure out what impact the transplants had on the 2020 election, and many Republicans are trying to figure out if Georgia 'fiddled' with the election process. Experts do agree on one thing, two actually: long-time (20 years or more) residents of Georgia are likely to vote 'Red' (according to Professor Charles Bullock of the University of Georgia in Athens) and second, that the preponderance of Conservative voters live outside the major cities.

Georgians are voting today (actually, over three million early-voted) as I write this. They will elect two Senators from among two Republican candidates and two Democrat ones. To date, several hundred million dollars has been dumped into the state's media as both parties see this election as being essential to their efforts to pursue their respective political ideologies. The Republicans need a win to counter a Democrat-dominated House and White House and the Democrats want a political trifecta with majorities in both Houses and the White House - something that would give them a clear path to pass sweeping Leftist legislation.

Georgians are not oblivious to this. How could they be with radio and TV commercials bombarding them every day - all day long - and with visits from prominent politicians from both sides of the political aisle? Joe Biden and President Trump were both there, yesterday.

Naturally, the national media is eating it all up with special live broadcasts from the state and round-the-clock reporting. Georgia hasn't had this much coverage since the 'peanut farmer from Plains' became President. After the election it may have to change its tag line on its license plates from "Georgia on my mind" to "As Georgia goes, so goes the nation." Later, this evening, we should know the results of those races and if we can raise our glasses and toast the future or find our crying towels and wipe the tears from our eyes.

Then, on Wednesday at 1:00 pm Eastern Time, we will witness another major political event as a joint session of Congress attempts to certify the electoral results of the 2020 Presidential election. Presided over by the Vice-President, Mike Pence, it is expected that a dozen Republican Senators and as many as 100 Republican Congressional Representatives will object to the results and instead ask that the vote be suspended for ten days while an election audit of several states take place, proving that there is never a dull moment in American politics.

Tune in if you have the stomach for it.

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