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Opinion: Vote against candidates with anti-democracy ideals

By DAN BARKER | Democratic columnist

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The emotional trauma and scars of extremism continue to alter the face of the Idaho we all love.

Last week another petal of democracy fell to the floor as we watched our neighbor Congresswoman Liz Cheney lose her seat, choosing truth and country before lies and fealty. Loyalty to one person or party is not the Idaho most of us grew up in. But that new Idaho may be the reality after this next election.

It's not about being against extremism. It's about supporting and embracing democracy. We must understand the critical contrasting differences as we go out and vote in November. Party lines continue to get blurred by people suiting up and preparing to battle all opposing views. Rather than dividing up as Republicans and Democrats, people of good faith should review whether their candidate supports anti-democracy ideals.

At the heart of our democracy is our right to vote. Those looking to block and control democracy want voting to become more complex. Soldiers against democracy want a system that only allows certain people to vote. An appetite that is created and perpetuated by fear of widespread voter fraud. It is simply the mask used to create laws that only allow certain people to vote. All voters should be mindful of the candidates who are election deniers and that look to serve themselves and expect fealty from constituents.

The other strikes against democracy have been swirling around us. For the first time, our Supreme Court struck down precedence to remove, rather than recognize, freedoms. We are not talking about the abortion debate from 12 years ago. It is about health care, not an all-or-nothing approach that removes autonomy and expertise from decision-making. Last year our representatives passed a trigger law in hopes that a politicized Supreme Court would ban abortion. They made sure to go one step further, making it the strictest approach across all 50 states. A decision made blindly through party-line voting and not considering the nearly 900,000 women in this state and their long-term health.



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Democracy cannot prevail represented by third-party organizations funded and directed by big money. The Idaho Freedom Foundation has spread lies against candidates and initiatives to misinform and falsely influence. Their most potent weapon is the chaos that comes from their misinformation, distractions and gaslighting. In this week's announcement of a special legislative session being called, the Freedom Foundation turned to our lame duck lieutenant governor who has been closely tied with white supremacist groups.

Identifying these soldiers against democracy and voting against them is not about a new Idaho or our traditional values. It is not a battle against extremism or the GOP. It is about standing up for our democracy. It is a fight for our continued democracy. It is critical to

move beyond party lines and who influences them and require more from our elected representatives. If anything changes, it should be an understanding that extremism and democracy cannot live in the same house, slowly tearing apart our state and country.

Dan Barker is a leadership development consultant and the vice chair of the Bonneville County Democratic Central Committee.