

https://www.postregister.com/opinion/columns/opinion-a-call-for-civil-and-ethical-politics/article_55c26924-3513-11ed-8472-1b01c644eb90.html

Opinion: A call for civil and ethical politics

By JANICE BROWN | Democratic columnist

Sep 16, 2022

I talked with registered Democrats in my precinct this week, and many expressed their disgust with the incivility of today's political discourse and the divisive behavior of bad faith political actors. From the in-your-face expletives that cruise by on MAGA-labeled trucks to the incendiary statements of Idaho Republican Party leaders, the posture adopted by the extreme right is both offensive and intimidating — and it appears to be by design.

The objectives of such rhetoric are increasingly clear: Undermine trust in our voting processes, reverse years of progress in civil rights and erode confidence in government institutions. In addition to creating chaos for our public schools and libraries, right-wing extremists are imposing on the rest of us a single religious view with respect to abortion rights and reproductive health.

The individual freedoms we enjoy in the United States rely on an honest, ethical and law-abiding society — one that advances liberty and justice for all persons. When one faction tries to impose its own religious or cultural views on the rest of American society, it poses a great danger t



Jan Brown

increasingly diverse country. It seems hypocritical that conservatives who profess to love freedom are instead advocating for restrictive, authoritarian measures that turn back the clock on human rights.

Intimidation seems to be the objective of conservative political activist Michael Armstrong who changed his party affiliation and filed as a candidate for Democratic precinct committeeman. By doing so, he deceived the voters of Precinct 39, who logically would assume he would participate in good faith in Democratic Party activities and uphold the party's values.

Because he was unopposed in the primary, Armstrong is now a voting member of the Bonneville County Democratic Central Committee despite his past positions. Idaho law provides the party no recourse to deal with a person who misrepresents himself to the voter. As a result, the Bonneville DCC must cope with Armstrong's presence and disruptive behavior as well as his public criticism of party leaders, as evidenced on this opinion page within the past two weeks.

So, should Democrats respond with similar unethical behavior? Some might say the ends justify the means, but deceiving voters is not the way forward.

Idaho Democrats need to call out rather than emulate the unethical, highly divisive practices of Idaho Republican leaders, who appear to be backsliding on human rights, basic freedoms and democracy itself. I applaud those honorable Republicans who have publicly endorsed Democratic candidates in statewide races this year in an attempt to restore a measure of integrity and competency to Idaho politics.

Added note: The first public debate between Legislative District 33A candidates is on Monday evening at 7 p.m. at the Shilo Inn. Republican incumbent Barb Ehardt will be debating Democratic challenger Miranda Marquit.

Jan Brown is the state committee woman for the Bonneville County Democra-

tic Central Committee.