



Rod Miller: Unsolicited Advice to Wyoming Democrats

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My Democrat friends,

As a young Republican, coming of age in Wyoming's U. P. Corridor during the sixties and seventies, I'm here to testify that the Wyoming Democratic Party was once a force to be reckoned with. Back in the day, it produced political titans that left their bootprints all over the Cowboy State.

It kept us Republicans honest. But that was then. This is now.

I'm sure the fire-breathers in the Wyoming GOP will come down on my head like a bag o' rattlesnakes for saying this, but your state needs you to muscle up. Unless and until your party can once again provide a counter-balance to the Wyoming Republican Party, my party will continue to drag us further toward their terminal weirdness.

These days, your candidates (except in Albany and Teton Counties, but we'll get to that later) crash and burn simply because of the hyphen D behind their names on the ballot. Good folks willing to hazard the uncertain waters of Wyoming politics step off into the deep end with that millstone around their necks

So don't whine when Republicans occupy the field that you have abandoned. And don't gloat for carrying two counties out of twenty-three. If you consider successes in Laramie and in the Greater Wilson Metroplex as templates for winning in the rest of the 307, then you have doomed yourselves.

Please forgive my impertinence, but here is what I think you should do. Appeal more to the center of Wyoming political life, than to the margin. The Big Ol' Middle among our

citizens is woefully under-represented these days. Go get 'em.

Realize that the center is further to the right than during the days when unions and the U.P. were political fulcrums of power. But its still the center, and nobody is speaking for them. Find that center. That's where the votes will come from.

Also realize that you will never appeal to that center with a message from the far Left. These people in the middle are not Tesla-drivin', NPR – listenin' vegetarians. What works in Albany and Teton Counties will not work with these folks. But a moderate, centrist Democratic Party just might.

Of COURSE there are marginalized groups that deserve political representation, and they look to your party. And Democrats WILL be able to help those folks. But that can only happen when you win elections.

If it gives you the willies to re-evaluate the message or the platform of the Wyoming Democratic Party, then please realize that messages don't win elections, numbers do. Figure out what number you need, and go get it.

If your party needs two hundred-thousand votes to win a statewide office, but only fifty-thousand of your fellow Wyomingites buy into your message enough to cast their votes your way, then don't blame the voters. Blame your message. And do something about it.

Mold your message to fit the minds of the voters. Don't try to mold the minds of the voters to fit your message. That's not dishonest, that's politics.

And politics is really pretty simple stuff.

Don't just twiddle your thumbs and wait for the Wyoming GOP to self-destruct. That would be a political cop-out of the first order. Who wants to vote for indecisiveness like that?

And don't tell me, "Its up to you to control your own party." That is nothing more than you wanting someone else to fight your battles for you. One could call that political desertion.

Forgive me if I have offended you. I speak less as a partisan than as a citizen of Wyoming. Your party has rendered incredible service to our common home over the years. And we need you to step up again.

As a competitor in the field of politics, I'll remind you that platforms and messages are nice but wins are better. That's Machiavellian, I know, but its still true. Those wins are there for you if you want to go to work and get them.

Lord knows the Wyoming GOP isn't gonna fight y'all over that big wedge of Wyomingites in the center. They are otherwise occupied.

If you aren't willing to do that, and if you are satisfied with planting your flag in only two counties, then you have transformed a once-great political institution in Wyoming into little more than a political commentator, like me.

Respectfully,

Rod Miller

A Member of the Loyal Opposition

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