

Why the American Voter is Frustrated

When the Republican Party won both houses of Congress, and the Presidency, in 2000, it was the first time since the Eisenhower administration that the party controlled the Executive and Legislative branches. The rank and file of the party believed they would finally achieve their political aspirations.

Just eight years later, the Democrats equaled the Republican achievement and took similar control of the government.

Although the country is generally divided, both political parties had the opportunity to enact the very legislation and policies of their supporters. In retrospect, what happened only led to more voter frustration.

Supposedly, the Republican Party is the party of limited government. But what happened to government during those six years (2001 to 2007) was hardly limited. The Republicans spent so much that even the Democrats could not charge them with cutting programs without the country breaking into laughter.

The Republicans also generally agree on a flat or flatter tax rate, limiting immigration, and ending federal funds to Planned Parenthood. None of those were achieved, despite theoretically having the votes to achieve them.

Instead of Republicans clamoring to repeal the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare), they could have put their own health care plan into place. They didn't. And, that left an opening for the Democrats.

The Democrats are the party of bigger government. And when they held the Presidency and Congress for two years (2009 to 2011) they did not disappoint in terms of spending. But, what about other issues that most, if not many, Democrats support?

Democrats call for increases in minimum wage, health care for everyone, stricter gun control laws, raising taxes on the wealthy, and climate change legislation. What happened to these issues? Not much.

Why didn't they raise the minimum wage to fifteen, twenty, or even thirty dollars an hour? Why not significantly raise the top tax rate on the wealthy? Where was the "common sense" gun control legislation they claim everyone will support? They had the votes to achieve all of this and more.

True, they passed the Affordable Care Act. But the cited goal was health insurance coverage for every American. Not even the most partisan Democrat can honestly claim that actually happened.

For all of the apocalyptic rhetoric about Climate Change, where was the legislation to confront it? What happened to carbon taxes, or another Kyoto Treaty?

Both parties complain about these issues incessantly when they are out of power. But when they finally acquire the power to achieve something, very little is done.

Supporters will argue that Presidents are inundated by countless domestic and foreign issues, and cannot address every issue at once. Yes, we are all aware of that. That's why we give them enormous government staffs.

And if the staffs are busy, what about the rest of the party? You mean no Democrat had gun control or minimum wage legislation ready to enact? No Republican had flat-tax bills or immigration reform legislation ready to debate?

True, the party out of power would have protested, but they would complain anyway. That's politics.

Some claim special interests are to blame, or politicians would prefer to play it safe and be reelected.

However, I believe they don't want to accomplish these goals for political reasons. If political parties enacted the changes they promised, what issues would they run on in the next election? Since so much of our political discourse focuses on voting against someone rather than for someone, it would make little sense to give their supporters everything they wanted.

Whatever the reason, the American electorate is very unhappy, and I'm not sure they can be placated anytime soon.

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