

Surviving the Election

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Because of the deadline for publication, this column is being written before the votes for president have been cast. Hopefully as you are reading it, we will know the results of the election. Another contested presidential election outcome in which the Supreme Court makes a partisan-like decision would be extremely unhealthy for our country. Our image as a beacon for Democracy would be further tarnished in the world, and the confidence of many voters at home would be lost.

In a nation that is known for its technology leadership, we continue to have problems devising a system of voting and counting the votes that is fool-proof. It is unacceptable that people leave the polls without assurance that their votes have been properly recorded and will be accurately counted. With the endless business and financial transactions that are completed daily, there is no reason that some of the same technology could not be adapted for voting.

Beyond the mechanics of voting, the pre-election efforts to intimidate particular voters and to challenge the registration of others were reprehensible. Elections should be won on the strength of one's position on the issues and not on the ability to keep the opponent's voters from the polls. Winning an election is important, but not at the cost of actions that are dishonest or unjust.

The exciting aspect of this election campaign has been the energizing of many new people with interest in campaign issues. Every presidential election brings out many new voters. The challenge always is to keep them interested and involved in the future. Certainly the issues of this presidential campaign could not be overstated. But those same issues will be around in two more years for the Congressional and Senatorial races, and the outcomes of these elections are crucial to a satisfactory resolution of the issues.

Also impacting the daily lives of people are discussions of the issues in state and local governments. The new activists need to remain interested and involved in these levels of campaigns as well.

If I did not see you at your polling place on November 2, thanks for voting. Remember that in Virginia we have an election every year. Plan to come out again next year.