

VOTE



Now is your chance to be heard! We've listened to the debates, read the articles, sifted through fact and fiction (hopefully) and now it's time to use our voices!

Some of you know that my view of politics is, ONE VOICE, ONE VOTE, so I tend to look down on all the slamming and spamming that goes on. Each of us gets to vote our conscience based upon our own values, circumstances and needs. All the noise, yard signs, rally's and posturing won't change that at the polls.

I do however; feel it's important to talk about the *ACT* of voting! I know it's easy to feel like your vote doesn't really matter but.....*that is wrong!* Our rights, liberties and freedoms have been protected by those who have gone before us, so that we *could* be heard. Years ago, people actually lost their lives fighting for the right to participate in our voting process. The way I see it, it isn't only our *right* to vote, it is our duty!

I've been asked about my personal political views and I freely share them when asked however; I don't have a need to make anyone else wrong if they vote differently than I do. Isn't that what being an American is all about anyway? Regardless of whom my friends or family vote for, I am just thrilled to know they participated!

Since I'm not a straight ticket kind of voter, I tend to dig really deep into the issues. I use my own personal senses to determine the truth and I don't lend much credibility to what I hear in the media. It takes a lot more time but I would rather vote my conscience than align with a party. Either way I encourage you to think for yourself and to do more than listen to the words of reporters or politicians as they are all spin doctors. Few politicians actually stand on truth for whatever reason so it's up to YOU to educate yourself on what is real and accurate.

Here are some great sites that I have been plugging into over the past few months. They are bipartisan sites and even if you haven't yet begun to dig into the race, it's not too late to start. I know the facts can be daunting because what one candidate says the other directly contradicts. Then they spin it back on the other and confusion is created. Well, don't shut down, dig in! Find out for yourself what history says about what each candidate and their track record. It is all there if you look for it!

<http://wire.factcheck.org/>

<http://www.npr.org/>

<http://www.factcheck.org/>

<http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/>

<http://elections.nytimes.com/2008/president/candidates/obama-mccain.html>

Here's how I do it; since there are so many issues to study, determine what the top 3 or 4 important issues are to you. Is your hot button the economy or personal freedoms like abortion? Whatever the case, don't settle on just one issue to measure your candidate. Pick a few and measure the candidates by all of those pertinent issues. It makes it hard to find one candidate who brings it all to the table. In the end, it isn't about charisma or persona, it's about that gut feeling you get when you know which candidate is right for you.

Here is one of my own personal guidelines (take it or leave it) that I use in making my final decision on who I will vote for. **It is this; there is no free ride for any American. Our Country was founded upon the sweat and blood of men and women who didn't settle for mediocrity. When we allow our Government to mandate our choices, we are losing our freedom. When we allow Government to set our minimums and maximums, we give up our liberty. Setting standards is one thing but making *requirements* of the people based on only one marker???** Well, I don't think that makes sense. **When I hear about "mandates", I tend to turn the other way because if something is required of me, I have lost my right to choose and therefore, I have lost freedom. If I don't vote against that, I forfeit a freedom!**

This year's election has been nothing short of bad Broadway musical complete with an out-of-step chorus line and bad acting! Don't allow yourself to be corralled based upon the candidates race or gender and remember, in 2008, we will have a FIRST no matter which candidate wins! THAT is very cool! Pay attention to the absolute facts and most of all remember this: Democrats and Republicans always say they will change the same things in our Government and for years, each time one or the other is in office, they do about one tenth (if that) of the things they talked about prior to their election. In fact, the issues after the Oath of Office are taken; seldom include the issues being raved about on the campaign trail. Don't be suckered or clueless by the extremes of two parties. Campaign issues are dramatic and bi polar on purpose! So that people can clearly determine a side to be on!

The power of the Office is actually limited by design. The answer lies somewhere in the middle and does the power and ability of the President. Don't forget to look at the values, morals and background so you can get an idea of how they align with your views and how you feel they would work for our Country. When the election is over, if you come to me to talk about the outcome, my first question will be "did you vote"? If you're approached for a discussion or a gripe session, you should ask the same thing too. I won't entertain complaints by those who don't participate in the voting process. My personal political mantra is this: If you don't vote, DON'T Bitch! NOW THAT WOULD BE A GREAT BUMPERSTICKER!