

Oct 24, 2000

Dear Colleagues,

I sent the below to perhaps 100 family & friends at the beginning of October. 55 of you are now receiving it.

I believe that this election, more so than any in recent memory, will turn on person-to-person political persuasion. This is not an election to sit out. Please go to work!

Dick Bernard

DICK@CHEZ-NOUS.NET

AS (6905 ROMEO RD
OF WOODBURY MN 55125
10/29 651-730-4849

THIS IS PREPARED & DISTRIBUTED ON MY OWN TIME AND AT MY OWN EXPENSE.

THE REST OF THIS LETTER IS POLITICAL IN NATURE AND IS MY FEELINGS, FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION.

I will vote confidently and proudly for the Gore-Lieberman ticket in November. I think they offer by far the best leadership potential for the United States for the next four years. There are major and important differences between their and their parties positions, and those of the opposition candidate and party.

Being president of the United States is very hard work - a task very few are willing to take on, and fewer still are capable of mastering. Thankfully, some are willing to serve and put up with the "fishbowl" atmosphere and put up with all the abuse that seems to come with contemporary politics.

More than ever before, the United States is by far the most diverse, complex, richest and powerful nation on earth. No decision is easy, and every decision can be and is challenged by someone. There is no 100% right position on anything (though every individual and group special interest is sure their position is 100% right, and can "prove" it). Often I wonder why anyone would want the job of President of the United States.

Mr. Gore has long and distinguished experience at the federal level - House, Senate and Vice-President - and has the leadership ability, experience, and a positive record of accomplishment to continue to move this country forward in the next four years. His running mate Joe Lieberman is similarly accomplished and experienced in federal government service.

This year is not "time for a change". The last eight years have been generally very good years for the U.S. President Clinton and Vice-President Gore have been excellent and highly competent leaders domestically and around the world.

I would vote for Gore-Lieberman if the qualifications of the candidates were the only issue. But there is another major factor that bothers me this year especially.

The next four years is especially not a time for the entire federal government - United States, House, Senate and White House - to be controlled by the contemporary version of the Republican party. In my opinion, the current Republican leadership is one of the most negative and mean-spirited I have ever seen in control of either major party - and I have 39 years of informed voting experience on which to base this opinion. They have had six years to make their reputation, and their mark has been neither pretty nor effective, in my estimation. Their style has been "take no prisoners", and to relentlessly punish their enemies - the Clintons #1 on their list. Their leadership seems positioned far to the right of even most Republicans.

(In contrast, Clinton/Gore have been criticized often by many of those in their own party as being too moderate, too centrist. This quality has been central to their success, I believe. Most Americans are moderate, reasonable, people, a fact which seems unappreciated by the hard right and

left advocates.)

I feel that if the current Republican leadership controlled all three legislative branches, we could forget about any balancing of interests of all the "American people" in the next four years - an uncompromising ideology will hold sway as critical policies for our nation's future are made. I don't believe that Mr. Bush has the leadership ability or experience to be sufficiently his own person on critical national or international policy decisions, particularly with the current Congressional and Senatorial leadership in place. I believe that is why he got such an immense amount of financial support last spring to win his party's nomination - he is probably deemed most pliable by power brokers unseen and unaccountable to the people..

Ralph Nader? Wrong campaign at the wrong time. He is a political "bookend", like Newt Gingrich and Pat Buchanan. An ideological purist. He has no chance of winning, or even coming close. If by some fluke he won, he would have no constituency in power positions - people who could actually move his agenda.

As I stated earlier, we are the most diverse, complex and powerful nation on earth, and I believe we are not well served by being controlled by the most radical of the right or the left, and Mr. Nader is a radical (many of whose ideas make sense, and I could support).

I will be very surprised if Mr. Nader will be any more than a marginal candidate, in terms of votes actually received. Even so, many of the likely small percentage of votes he draws will basically be taken from the party which traditionally has had the most sympathy for his views. Nader will thus help the archconservatives who are his antithesis - an interesting paradox. (The only "Nader Raider" ever elected to Congress, Toby Moffatt of CT, is publicly campaigning against a vote for Nader as being counterproductive to the "Greens" cause.)

The campaign will rage on in the next few weeks, and it will basically be a war of television images, most likely, including the debates. "Spin" will dominate - attempting to make one candidate/party look good, the other bad, in state and national races primarily. A while ago, a piece of information came across public radio that in 1996 \$150 million was contributed for political campaigns this went up to \$300 million in 1998; and is expected to top \$750 million this year. Most of this comes from organized "special interests", and most of these are the rich or those who have access to a great deal of money for potential political influence.

Much of this money goes into tv ads, extremely carefully made, whose sole purpose is to attempt to manipulate the electorate. (The 1/30 second "RATS" image was not an innocent mistake in the recent notorious ad.) Much of this year's political money is cleverly disguised soft money which is used to advance the cause of one side or the other without campaign expenditure limits, and without clearly identifying the source of the money used to produce or air the ad.. By far the richest well of special interest money is Republican oriented, which is why there is almost no Republican rhetoric expended on the need for campaign finance reform. But all parties and big special interests on all "sides" are equally guilty, regardless of protestations.

I don't "do" tv anymore so I don't have to watch the ads - and I don't miss them. They are not intended to inform, the vast majority of them. **Who really produced and paid for the ads of your candidates? Where does he or she stand on true campaign finance reform at the federal level? It is a critical question, especially for incumbents to national offices and for candidates aspiring to those offices.**

Do you differ with me? Fine. I simply ask that you cast an informed ballot November 8!

(I would like to believe that regardless of who is elected next month, this country will do just fine - this year I'm not at all sure that that is true.)

I wish all of you a great week, or two, or more....