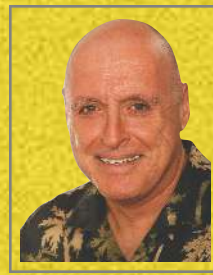


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



692 Miss Morris Knew How to Run an Election

You don't step on Superman's cape, you don't spit into the wind, you don't pull the mask off the old Lone Ranger, and you don't mess with an enduring, assuring foundation of America. That's coming next, on The Extra Point.

It was the fourth grade, Miss Morris's class. She was gorgeous. We all loved her. On the first day of school she asked for nominations for class president, and my name was given. Then another kid's name was tossed out, and the election was on.

There was no time for make campaign signs, run TV ads, or anything else. Miss Morris passed out a small piece of paper, and we were to write the name of the person we wanted to win, fold it twice, then it was collected.

The unwritten rule of elections in that day, at least among kids, was that the polite thing to do was to vote for your opponent. So I did. I was a polite kid. When we were done, we went to lunch. Oh, the tension, the uncertainty, it was almost impossible to eat or play.

When the lunch period was over, we came back into the classroom. Miss Morris had the results. Of the 25 kids in the class, you needed 13 votes to win. I ended up with 12. My own vote had doomed my candidacy. I congratulated the winner, a kid named Billy, and told him I'd voted for him. He looked at me like I was from outer space and said, "Why would you do that?"

Apparently, Billy didn't know the unwritten rule. He was a lousy president, but he won, and my political fortunes were tossed on the scrap heap of coulda/woulda/shoulda. You can tell I've put this behind me and it doesn't still bother me.

Even though I lost, the one thing we all could take comfort from was that the election was

held in the open, in full view so everybody had confidence in the outcome. Americans had always held elections that way. The voters were clearly identified. It was and still should be now, a statement to the rest of the world that we may fight like cats and dogs to get our candidates elected, but we hold fair balloting, and voters are required to provide identification in order to participate.

This year that all changed, and 80 million ballots were mailed out across the country. It was about COVID-19, and fear that going to a polling place, wearing a mask and social distancing, would expose voters to the virus.

Most go to work, or the grocery store, home and hardware store, run other errands, and even protest in large groups, but this one-time exercise, voting, was the real danger? I don't think so.

In Guam, about a large percentage of ballots were cast in advance of the election, many people doing so from their car. It was a smooth process, and one that could have been carried out across the country, for the benefit of those who didn't want to come out in a mass of people on the actual election day. We had to provide photo ID as verification, and we signed for the right to vote.

Everywhere else, they mailed ballots to the last address given by the voter. If that person had skipped the 2018 mid-term election, it meant the address was four years old.

America is a transient country, with millions of people moving to a new residence every year. After four years, how many ballots never got to the intended party?

(Con't.)

We've already seen examples of lost ballots, ballots ending up in a trash bin, somebody caught trying to sell thousands of ballots, and who knows what else?

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Beyond that issue, what assurance is there that the person voting and returning the ballot by mail is who they say they are? Verification requirements vary by state. In Arizona, no witness is necessary and you sign a statement of authenticity. In Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, and Pennsylvania, no witness is needed, just a simple signature. One that would not be matched up with any previous signature for authenticity purposes. In Wisconsin, they required a witness or notary, and a signature. So, how much security was there that ballots could not fall into the wrong hands, and political misdeeds committed?

We don't yet know how much this has played a role in the 2020 presidential race between Donald Trump and Joe Biden, but one thing is clear, mail-in ballots are a bad idea and have taken us away from having clear assurance that our elections are on the level.

Here's the main point. We were the shining example to the world of how to stage a legitimate, worry-free election, where the outcome wasn't in question because of dirty deeds. We've given that away now. We opened the door to potential fraud, and half the country was thrilled to do it.

Whoever is declared the winner of this presidential contest, the loser is America. Mail-in ballots need to be abolished in the future. Absentee voting, with a legitimate ID is fine as always, but unsecured voting cannot be allowed to go forward.

Miss Morris wanted to make sure we all knew the voting system was secure, and carried with it the complete assurance that the results were legitimate. She would never have allowed mail-in voting, and we need to follow her example.

That's The Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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