

THE 12 SUGGESTIONS FOR THE CANDIDATES by Si Frumkin

The current selection of a candidate for the most important position on earth has, so far, resulted in creating the most confusing, unpredictable and frustrating experience for the voting public. The experts are frustrated, the polls are inaccurate, economic news and constantly recurring foreign crises are depressing, and the confused electorate gives almost unprecedented low ratings to the politicians in both the executive and legislative branches of government.

The Democratic candidates have adopted “Change!” as their mantra without really elaborating what the changes might be, how these mysterious changes could be achieved given lack of cooperation between the political parties, and how they would be paid for. The Republicans who are running neck and neck with one another because all their agendas are practically indistinguishable, also promise changes that are based on adherence to the policies and philosophy of Ronald Reagan – a President who left office decades ago.

The electorate “don’t get no satisfaction!” from either of the parties. The public is mostly indifferent – it doesn’t especially love or hate any of them or what they have to offer. The result? The largest percentage of undecided voters in history.

It almost looks as if all candidates shared one strategy expert who told them that the promise of change was the bait to be dangled before the voters.

Clearly, the expert is right. Americans do want change but they want something more than nebulous promises – they want assurances and sensible

discussion of reasonable goals on matters that are supported by overwhelming majorities. There are no secrets involved here – polls have shown that an overwhelming majority of Americans from both parties support specific policies that are practically never mentioned by current candidates. Because of this support, these policies would have an excellent chance of bi-partisan acceptance in Washington. A candidate adopting them as a program in the name of national reconciliation, bi-partisan cooperation and just common sense would probably win the White House.

A number of these suggestions come from Newt Gingrich, the brilliant politician, historian and philosopher who, unfortunately, is held in low esteem by our media. Others come from a variety of other sources. Here they are, in no particular order:

- Initiate a policy to rapidly build and expand nuclear power production to reduce our dependency on imported oil. Nuclear power is clean, safe and inexpensive. The problem of used fuel storage has been solved in countries like France, Japan and others; we can use their methodology. It takes 10-12 years to construct and certify a nuclear plant. This time must be reduced but, in any case, we have to start now!
- Rush the construction of additional oil refineries. Our refineries are old and subject to stoppages. We do not have enough of them to efficiently process what we need and are plagued by constant price increases.

- Offer a prize of \$1 billion – or more - for the creation, construction and marketing of a feasible car or truck that can deliver 100 miles per gallon.
- Give a tax deduction and a bonus for conversion of homes to be more energy efficient.
- Declare English to be our official language. Discontinue dual language policies for immigrants and others. Introduce more foreign language classes in schools for those who want to learn another language.
- Stop *begging* Saudi Arabia and other Arab nations to reduce the price of oil. *Force* them to reduce it to \$50 per barrel. Use sanctions, diplomacy and whatever else is needed – including the passage of tankers through the Persian Gulf - to stop the flow of billions to countries that use the money to incite anti-American hatred worldwide.
- Introduce a system of school vouchers that would provide scholarships for children at schools chosen by parents. This program would mimic the immensely successful GI Bill that provided free college education to American GIs after World War II. It would create competition between schools for the scholarship money by producing educated students.
- Work with Europe on a program to recruit workers in Latin America for work in Europe. This would provide an immigrant population that shares religion, background, and similar cultural and language skills with the host countries, unlike the currently, mostly Muslim, immigrants. It would also drastically reduce the pressure on our borders.

- Start immediately drilling for oil in our coastal waters and in the currently off-limits Alaskan fields. It has been shown that the local fauna – like caribou and others – are not disturbed or harmed by the oil pipelines.
- Respond quickly and effectively to attacks on our citizens here and abroad. As a suggestion, warn Iran that its only oil refinery would be destroyed unless Iran's help in killing American soldiers in Iraq is immediately stopped.
- Make the election of judges more transparent by making the judge's record of convictions, controversies and complaints available to the voters.
- This one is optional but would bring votes – including mine. Promise to never pronounce the word “nuclear” as “new–cue-lar”!

I am sure that you can think of a few items yourself that would probably be acceptable to both Republicans and Democrats. Let your voice be heard – and if you want to make a copy of this column and mail it to a few politicians – well, that is another good suggestion.