

The Election Aftermath in DC – How Divided Are We? How Divided Will We Be?

The pain of this Presidential election has ended— the candidates started with more than 50% of voters disliking each of them, spent a combined \$1.5 billion to ingratiate themselves with the voters, and ended with more than 50% still not liking either of them.

So how divided are we, as a nation? Forget the polls, I have my own gauge: how many are eager to witness the remarkable institution of our country, the peaceful transfer of power to a leader selected by the people? We take that transfer for granted, but only a handful of countries enjoy that, and no country on earth has ever sustained this for 200 years, much less our current record of 240 years.

Each year we host guests on our balcony overlooking the President walking/riding from his swearing-in at the Capitol, along Pennsylvania Avenue, to the White House (you are invited - you'll have to pass a Secret Service security check, so let us know). When Obama was elected, and then reelected, a very few, declined our invitation. (no worries, the Secret Service limits the number, and there are plenty of takers.) But this time, some are so disappointed/angry, they say they won't come – 'he's not their President'. It's still early, we will see. After all, Barbara Streisand is still here, hasn't moved to Canada as she promised to do, (yet); Supreme Court Justice Bader hasn't departed for New Zealand; Amy Schumer hasn't left for Spain; hard to tell if Cher is still on this planet, or has left for her apparent refuge of choice - Jupiter. So my personal gauge of how divided we are as a country will be more clear on January 20 – how many will be eager to witness the pagentry of the transfer of power, and how many won't?

So where do we go from here?

Lame Duck has begun, and will accomplish only one thing before adjourning this year – agreeing on the Federal Budget for Fiscal Year 2017 (which began October 1 of 2016!). The current Continuing Resolution, expires Dec. 9, so Congress must approve a budget that extends at least until President-elect Trump takes office in early 2017, and possibly through the end of the current Fiscal Year (Sept. 30, 2017).

In the meantime, the President-elect is setting his Cabinet. He promised to 'drain the swamp' — nonetheless, his Cabinet will be a combination of new faces, and some very familiar to those of us residing here in the 'swamp'.

Similarly, his legislative agenda is already emerging, and despite the campaign rhetoric, it will start with a bi-partisan, cooperative effort involving Republicans and Democrats, the White House and Congress: developing a sustainable program to build the nation's infrastructure. Not quite the incendiary beginning many had feared or hoped for.

Next, tax reform, starting with corporate tax policies; again, this will proceed with more bipartisanship and fewer fireworks than many had feared, or hoped for. The personal tax scheme is going to be more contentious.

There will be some tough fights, and tough confirmation battles in coming months, but perhaps fewer than expected. After all, nothing in this entire election cycle, from the Republican and Democratic primaries to the general election, has happened as expected.