

# Political candidates matter as much as the voters

What would an election season be like if the political party of the candidate were never stated? If a picture of the candidate were never seen? If the voice of the candidate never heard? If the gender, religious affiliation, sexual orientation – were never known?



What if there were no mudslinging? What if only the truth could be said? What if sound bites taken out of context could not be used?

It's doubtful our biases will ever be overcome. We all have built-in prejudices no matter how open-minded and evolved we claim to be.

Yes, it's a utopian idea to think there could be an election where votes are cast only for a candidate's ideas, beliefs and record. But we all have the power, if we choose to exercise it, to eliminate all the clutter that boils down to propaganda and bias.

Many of you have already voted. Others will go to the polls throughout today to cast their vote.

This voting thing is something that makes the United States of America so unique. It's a freedom, a right that is bestowed upon us without threat from others no matter whom we vote for.

It's also a tremendous responsibility.

Unfortunately, in this ever polarized society we live in, we seem to have stopped listening, we've stopped communicating

without trying to talk over the other, we call each other names instead of arguing the issue. We have become the lowest common denominator of all of our parts instead of the best of all of the parts.

How do we reverse course?

Start by casting your ballot today for the best person for each position. Look beyond the party affiliation. Look at the individual. Look at what they stand for.

Lake Tahoe is struggling, the two states surrounding her are hurting, the nation is wounded. It's time to heal.

When we wake up tomorrow (assuming the votes are counted) there will be three new South Lake Tahoe City Council members, a new sheriff in El Dorado County, new governors in California and Nevada, and a lot of other familiar or new faces in office. It's doubtful any one person's ballot will have all the winners.

It's our individual choice how we react to the results. Does the name-calling begin again? Does the mud get hurled? Does the divisiveness remain and the uncooperativeness stay intact?

We hope not.

It's time to cooperate. It's time to do what's correct for the greater good and not just the person in the mirror. It's time to play nice in the sandbox of life. If we expect change from our elected officials, then we need to change as well. One person can make a difference, one vote can make a difference, but it will take all of us to bring about change for the greater good.