

## Just Vote... and make a difference...

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It's now an urban myth that Florida and elections are not a winning combination. After the 2000- 2004 Presidential elections, I learned that over the past eighty years, only about 50 percent of those people who were eligible to vote in the US have even put in an appearance! Since early voting has begun, I am now looking for potential voters because it's not just your right; it's your responsibility!

If you have already voted, then I'm impressed. At least I know now that you and I and Colin Powell agree that a 'change is definitely what America needs'. Who will win, when and how change will happen, what will the change be and who will the change effect seem to be the next questions. Since we all see the same things differently, what is there that we can possibly agree upon?

My first major concern with what was going wrong within this country surfaced shortly after 9/11, when prejudice for Muslims and people of Middle East origin blatantly began to grow and fester. Raising this same issue still on *Meet The Press*, Powell also told Tom Brokaw, *'that's not America.'* I never thought it was either, but when it appeared to be becoming the American way was when I began to research and write about such issues. Had this developed into a criterion for electing our president? It's not for me.

As I scrambled to identify the criteria that we are currently using to choose our presidents, The Daily Show brought to my attention Christopher Buckley, an American political satirist,

author and novelist, upon his hasty departure from the back-page column of *National Review*, the conservative magazine founded in 1955 by his father, William F. Buckley, Jr., the preeminent voice of American conservatism. Buckley's announcement in *The Daily Beast* blog, *that he was pulling the Democratic lever in November for the first time in his life*, had laid out his rationale and left his world of conservatives in political shock.

Better yet, Buckley has recently listed the 'vectors, parameters... and memes' that the American voters tend to base their decisions on when currently choosing a President; what follows is a sampling of his thoughts and wit [and there's more]:

- Is the candidate empathetic?
- Does he show a grasp of the challenges facing the Ohio plumber seeking to incorporate and yet simultaneously avoid the Alternative Minimum Tax?
- Is the candidate likely to bring about a spirit of bipartisanship in Washington?
- Is he, say, black? Arab?
- Is he mentally unhinged and scary?
- Finally, as president, will he take that call at 3 AM, or sleep through it?

Realistically, there are just too many variables to consider. So if you sincerely want to elect a president who represents *you* and *your values*, make your own list of values and choose which of those values are most important to you. Then pick the candidate that aspires to them and make your vote count. Let's see if this time we can actually elect a president that will represent a lot more than half of the eligible voters of this country. Then you will have definitely made a difference... and we will have a referendum on who, in truth, we are as a Nation.