

The Delray Democrat

Out of the Fire and Into the Frying Pan¹

Michael K. Cantwell

Yes, we averted an unmitigated disaster. It is doubtful that either our democracy or our planet would have survived another four years of Donald Trump.

But can they survive another six years of Mitch McConnell, two of them as Majority Leader? If democracy requires an informed citizenry, is democracy even possible when tens of millions of voters (and at least one member of Congress) believe QAnon claims that “the world is run by a cabal of Satan-worshipping pedophiles”?

Add the fact that we are in the middle of the worst economic collapse in nearly a century and the worst public health crisis in over a century. Joe Biden was on the inaugural platform with Barack Obama the last time a Democratic administration was charged with fixing the devastation wrought by a departing Republican administration, but the damage is far greater today.

Since February 2020, the economy has shed over 10 million jobs and 235,000 Americans have lost their lives to a pandemic that was exacerbated by President Trump’s colossal incompetence and callous indifference. By comparison, “only” some 3.8 million jobs were lost in the eight months before Obama and Biden were inaugurated.

Moreover, when Biden and Harris are inaugurated on January 21, 2021, Democrats will have a reduced majority in the House and “Dr. No” will remain in charge of the Senate. In 2009, Democrats controlled both Houses of Congress, which enabled them to pass the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and prevent a second Great Depression. When Obama left office, only Clinton and Reagan had created more jobs during their terms.

Some things remain constant, however. You can bank on Republicans becoming deficit hawks the second a Republican passes the presidency to a Democrat, usually after having exploded the deficit and crashing the economy. Although they aided and abetted George W. Bush in doubling the deficit, Republicans got religion as soon as Obama took office and didn’t shut up about the deficit until Donald Trump was elected, at which point they fell silent again. Expect more selective amnesia and shameless hypocrisy once Biden takes office.

And expect that Republicans will continue to deny four decades of empirical evidence establishing that tax cuts do “pay for themselves” and are in fact a very inefficient way to stimulate the economy, especially when the vast majority of the cuts go to the wealthiest Americans. For example, every quarterly report issued by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office found that the LEAST effective job creator in ARRA was tax cuts to the wealthy. More recently, the Trump tax cuts of 2017 had little stimulant effect and fell wildly short of paying for themselves.

¹ *The Delray Democrat*, November 2020, p. 1.

It's clear that Joe Biden and Kamala Harris have their work cut out for them. They have promised to reach out to Republicans and work for all Americans. We need to have their backs if Republicans revert to form and put party over country over planet.