

## Being a Democrat—Ugh

It's a rough time to be a Democrat.

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Region: [USA](#)  
Theme: [History](#)

*Notwithstanding the impotent Senate Minority. Not those ill-fated bills championed as victories by House Democrats only to be spurned by the upper chamber; not smug, elitist party fundraisers; not funding strategists and millionaire celebrity donors; not even bumbling Iowa Democratic party officials.*

I mean this forlorn orphaned democrat—me. A registered party member who every two years pens as few op-eds, who sends a check to a favorite candidate, who puts in volunteer hours to GOTV (Get Out The Vote), and wholeheartedly campaigns for any Democratic candidate whom she believes is honest and competent.

I don't need to add to today's punditry and partisan analyses spinning through media, much of it self-serving. And I eschewed the wondrous humor of SLN or Stephen Colbert following last week's dizzying post-impeachment-trial-post-State-of-the-Union-post-Iowa-caucus.

Put aside the shortsightedness of our overrated "founding fathers" and the ugliness of America's current president. Put aside the deepening cultural war.

I have a simple personal question: What am I, voter and local activist, to do now? By June, county committees and ad hoc citizen groups will begin training to prepare for the canvassing and fundraising that's precedes every November election. A lot is at stake; even at county and state levels, enthusiasm and commitment are essential.

For the first time in decades I'm not sure I want to continue. How can I go to college events to urge our young voters to engage in American democracy by embracing this party? How can I solicit funds for a candidate? How can I try to persuade the "undecided"—that burgeoning population of marginalized and disenchanting voters—to commit to a Democratic candidate? These unaffiliated citizens, we are told, are critical to an election's outcome. One friend, who when I shared my dismay over last week's events, replied simply: "In this era, democracy requires repose."

Oh dear. If repose is the answer, democracy's not working.

Forget about the disgusting, shamelessly victorious Trump and his gloating Republican party for a moment. Don't mollify us by theorizing who'll be on history's side. (Let history take care of that.) What are we going to do about a corrupt mealy-mouthed Democratic party? Why did Mrs. Pelosi extend her hand to Trump before his address to the nation? Would you have? And tearing up the speech after she'd applauded Trump's statements several times? Better to walk out. Decorum be damned—Trump's words themselves demonstrate that.

What about our other congressional leader, the Senate Democratic minority guy? Where was Charles Schumer's wisdom, daring and political acumen during that flawed and pompous process of impeachment? I hear not a whisper about his ineptness. Surely his failings contribute to Mitch McConnell's brilliance and victory.

While the gross incompetence of our so-called progressive (left, moderate or center) party is in the spotlight, on the sidelines we have newly exposed corruption within the DNC:- its attempts to delegitimize (as it did in 2016) the formidable old Socialist from Vermont; its shifting rules for who may and may not participate in the once-proud American process of public political debates; its shady business interests and ineptitude exposed in the recent Iowa caucus-election.

America's Democratic Party is not the place for anyone who calls herself progressive today. It was easier to blame it on Russian hackers, wasn't it?

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