

Trump Wants You on The Sidelines —Resist and Vote!

by Rogelio Saenz

In our lifetimes, there has not been a more important presidential election than the upcoming one on November 3.

As I peer forward into this approaching most critical election, my mind travels back to the night of November 8 when it was becoming increasingly clear that Donald Trump would be become our nation's 45th president. I stayed up late into the night and into the wee hours of the morning, hoping for a miracle that would prevent a disastrous ordeal that was sure to have no pretty end. Without winning the popular vote, Trump was elected president. The next day, I drove to Austin to speak to a sociology class at Austin Community College-Highland Campus on my analysis of the results of the election, an event that was scheduled several months in advance. The mood was somber with students having a dazed look in their eyes and a sense of impending dread. Many students in the class spoke about the fear and uncertainty that Trump's election would mean for the status of DACA recipients and their owned loved ones who were here without documentation. It was an unforgettable evening.

Two months later, on the eve of the presidential inauguration, I wrote an op-ed essay titled "Making a Mockery of the Presidency," which was published in the Rio Grande Guardian. In my opening paragraph, I stated: "As his presidential inauguration nears, President-Elect Donald Trump has already made a mockery of the U.S. presidency. There is little hope that he will occupy the position in a venerable fashion." In my concluding paragraph, I observed:

Finally, Trump's continued brash, egotistical, melodramatic, and hyperbolic disposition, his constantly changing plans and opinions about political issues, his lack of regard for truth, and his relentless and rash use of Twitter make him dangerous and certainly not a normal U.S. president. Without yet taking office, he has already made a mockery of the presidency. We should not normalize his behavior and actions as presidential.

Four year later, lamentably, Trump exceeded the disastrous expectations that I then envisioned. What have we gotten from him over the last four years? Vulgarity, sexism, misogyny, racism, lies, hate, his support for white nationalists and global dictators, the tearing away of children from their parents seeking political asylum, the



Art: Thomas Wimberly for amplifier.org

placement of those children in cages, an impeachment, more lies, divisiveness, unpresidential behavior, still more lies, the continual stoking of racism, and his catastrophic handling of the pandemic with 6.6 million cases and nearly 200,000 deaths of people in our country with the end nowhere in sight. In all of these ways, and still many others that I have not listed, Trump's America has been an abysmal disaster, a nightmare of cataclysmic proportion that the best dystopian novelists could not have plotted.

Oh, by the way, he wants four more years.

Not surprisingly, President Trump is using every tool in his deep stockpile of political tricks to stay in office. Trump and Republicans, for example, have made it more difficult—not less so—to vote. Voter ID laws, which disproportionately target persons of color, the poor, the elderly, young adults, among others, prevail in 34 states, including Texas. In addition, Trump has railed against mail-in voting despite

the ongoing pandemic. Furthermore, he inserted Louis DeJoy, a major donor to the Trump campaign, as postmaster general, the first holder of this position to not come from within the ranks of career postal workers in nearly the last two decades. DeJoy has gutted funding and services of the nation's postal system, assuring snags in the mailing and delivery of mail-in ballots. Finally, Trump has vigorously promoted the idea that if he loses the presidential election, it will be due to fraud, making it very likely that there will be a lengthy legal battle if he is not elected.

There has not been a more important election in our lives, regardless of how you vote. And it is not only about Trump, but very important elections at every level.

Every vote will be critically important on November 3. We cannot sit this one out. While the pandemic has impacted all nooks and crannies of the country, it has particularly devastated people of color. The latest figures from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show that, in comparison to the COVID-19 death rate of whites, Blacks are dying at a level 3.4 times higher, Latinos 3.2 times higher, Native Americans 2.5 times higher, and Asians 1.4 times higher. It is going to take immense effort for us to recover from the cataclysmic hit that COVID-19 has leveled against us. More than ever, we will need political leaders—at all levels from the presidency on down—who will look out after our best interests to ensure that we control the spread of the coronavirus, put an end to the pandemic, and provide the resources that will be needed for everyone to recover from this major assault. We will need political leaders who use an equity lens in policymaking to make sure that people who have been marginal-

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the proper forms and declaration. Visit trla.org or call 888-988-9996 for more.

Franklin D. Roosevelt said, “The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little.” With a looming housing crisis at our door, we will surely be tested. A renters’ commission in San Antonio will be a great aid in that measure. Evictions have been on the forefront of many renters’ minds in this pandemic. To owners, this is a piece of land with a building on it. A source of income, a business. For a renter, this is home. This is where you make memories. Build a life. Watch your children grow. Family barbecues and Thanksgiving dinner. Where your child takes their first steps or you send your teenager off to college. It’s where you raised your pet, proposed to your partner. It offers a safe haven, shelter against not just the elements and a pandemic, but the outside world as it is. It is the center-piece of



The sign in Spanish reads, “Displacements (evictions) are violence!”

your life. Even if only for that year lease. Housing is a basic human need. Individuals who wish to gain from those needs must be held to a higher standard. People before profit.

It is imperative for the renters of San Antonio to find their voice. We need to be strong. Take a stand. One of the best ways to do that is to call, write or email your city council representative and let them know you are in support of the proposed Renters’ Commission with only renters on the board. An-

other way to get involved is to fill out the survey on saspeakup.com or speak at public comment and during town halls. Renters make up almost half of this great city. Let’s show them what San Antonio is made of!

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ized in the past are included in the recovery plan.

Here in Texas, COVID-19 has disproportionately taken Latino lives. In fact, Texas is the only state where Latinos account for more than half of COVID-19 fatalities. Governor Abbott failed to protect us, sending mixed messages, speaking in indecipherable codes, and hiding loopholes in his COVID-19 orders, thus putting at risk the lives of Texans in order not to anger his political base that demanded opening up the state for business before it was safe to do so and who refuse to wear masks in public because it is an infringement on their personal rights.

Given what we know about Texas policymaking, we know that the recovery from the pandemic will be very challenging. The Republican-controlled legislature has been stingy with resources that benefit children, the poor, the working class, and people of color. Texas has not expanded Medicaid, thus making it difficult for many of our fellow Texans to gain access to Obamacare. Even in the midst of the pandemic where so many people have lost their jobs along with their insurance, Texas Republicans have stood stoically, refusing to help people gain access to insurance in these trying times. We will desperately need politicians who are going to support rank-and-file Texans during and after the pandemic. The 2018 election showed that it is possible for Texas to turn blue. A major turnout of Democrats in November could well accomplish this feat, overturning three decades of Republican dominance.

Without such a change, it is likely that there will be plenty of agony in the recovery from the pandemic, especially for people with limited resources.

In sum, please make sure that you vote. President Trump, the Republican trio that run Texas, and many other politicians who have dismissed us in their policy priorities are mounting obstacles to keep us from voting. More than ever, we need to respond and resist. To do so, we need to vote. As Willie Velasquez, the founder of the Southwest Voter Registration and Education Project, who died in 1988, used to remind us “su voto es su voz!” (“your vote is your voice”). Let’s not forget that we have lost so many people to COVID-19, many of them voters who did not get an opportunity to cast their ballot in the upcoming election. We need to make certain that they are not forgotten. Indeed, we can honor our beloved departed by voting in their honor.

If you are not registered to vote, please do so immediately.
October 5 is the deadline for doing so in order to vote in the upcoming presidential election.

Here is the link: bit.ly/registerVote. Please turn out to vote. More than ever, our future depends on our vote.

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