

**ALABAMA VOICES:
VOTERS WANT LEGISLATORS TO WORK FOR THEM: A CALL TO SERVICE
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BY KEN SCOTT**

Larry Dixon's *Alabama Voices* column -- "Reality, not theory" -- was one of the most poignant diatribes yet on the subject of the Nov. 2 election results. While his article addressed the issue from a legislative viewpoint, I would like to address the same issue from a voter perspective. While many will disagree, there may be just as many that agree. That's why we call it a democracy.

As a voter for more years than I care to recollect at this point in my life, I've never voted on the assumption that political science theory drives me to the polls. As Mr. Dixon stated, "reality and theory don't always mesh." Theory aside, I try to understand a piece of legislation and react to it, its authors and its supporters with an informed set of facts -- or reality, if you will. And at some point in the timeline, I begin to see patterns emerge. It appears that in these past years, the pattern that is emerging is precisely what Mr. Dixon noted in his column, which warrants repeating: "Do you want to energize these working, tax-paying, family-raising, community-supporting citizens? Let them come to the realization that for some elected officials their constituents are not their first concern. Let people realize the powerful lobbyists, the powerful special interests, and the next election are what their senator is interested in."

From a voter's perspective, the pattern that has evolved is that we the people are not what motivates many of our elected officials to make wise decisions. It seems that we are the proverbial expendables in their political careers. And after a time, it becomes a burden to live in a nation where our elected officials make the rules, often ignoring their own rules, and yet we voters are expected to pick up the composite tab for all the indiscretions of those we send to office. Some would accuse we the voters of not wanting to protect individuals who need help, whether that aid is in the form of health care or unfair treatment. Others attack us because we don't want to pay more taxes, as if the tax-and-spend phenomenon is a constitutional obligation. Since when is it the responsibility of the voter to blindly follow an individual just because his or her title has the word senator or congressman or legislator on his or her business card?

As a voter, I am not opposed to paying a reasonable amount in taxes. Nor am I going to and fro to demonstrate a hatred of my country or a particular person. But as a citizen who abides by the laws enacted by those I voted to be a wise steward of taxpayer funds and trust, you cannot continue to run roughshod over me or other voters as if we are a herd of "hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil" idiots. As Mr. Dixon suggested: "Those things start to sink in and even people who have voted for you in the

past start to wonder just how stupid you think they are. If you show someone time and time again that you think they are stupid and still believe in blue smoke and mirrors, they start to get energized."

Becoming energized in this election was not about my dislike for anyone because they have a skin color that is different from mine. And it wasn't because I oppose every piece of legislation, because there are some good decisions even among the vast ocean of deceptive practices in the Legislature. As with many voters, we were sick of the "total arrogance toward the citizenry" that Mr. Dixon alluded to. We're not the enemy of the state or the nation, yet if we voice opposition to policies that we believe are unfair to the majority of us, we are demonized and called names of the sort that civilized people know are expressly hatred of one person towards another.

As a voter, I believe absolutely that there are millions of similar sentiments that the outcome of the Nov. 2 election was a rumble of the people of this nation. The rumble occurred in every state and in Alabama as well. The rumble being clearly heard was the voice of the citizens of this nation, of which I am but one, saying to their legislators in all branches and functions of government that we are tired of their arrogance towards us.

Does this make me a tea party aficionado or an ideological nutcase? Not in the least. It makes me a citizen who works hard for what I have and is thankful to live in a country that still has a viable democracy, where the citizens of the nation still have a voice. This election, as Mr. Dixon indicated, was not about the theoretical outcome of electing a party. It was about the reality of an ideal that we elect candidates to do the business of the people, not of themselves or for personal gain. And just because these legislators make the decisions about what is best for we voters, does this mean that there is an inherent and infallible process that we the voter are no longer privy to as a voice of opposition or input? God forbid that ever becoming the outcome, for when that happens, our Constitution is worth less than the paper it was printed on.

Finally, from a voter perspective on the recent election outcome, I love this nation. I was drafted into military service, but it never occurred to me even once to go to Canada or resist my service. That's the reality of what this election says to all who seek public office: You serve the people who elected you, they don't serve you. In the times we find ourselves in, credible service to bring this nation back from the brink of faltering is so much needed. As a voter, I would ask those in elected positions to stop treating the voters as "how stupid you think they are."

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