

severely compromised administration

Sounds harsh doesn't it? However, it does seem to be a fitting description of America's political leadership. Special money interests have effectively eroded the ethical, moral and social values of our legislative and executive branches of government. Only the judicial branch has thus far avoided scandal. Recently, though, there is evidence the executive branch is attempting to suborn the prerogatives of our courts. The oil lobby, gun and arms lobby, the pharmaceutical lobby and others ad nauseam have so saturated American political coffers that no congressman or senator is immune to their influence. We have pork barrel money buying bridges to nowhere in Alaska and more kids on prescription drugs in schools than addicts on the streets. We can waste untold billions overseas but can't afford higher education for our students or adequate social security funding for our retirees.

There is evidence the public is no longer fooled by the disgraceful conduct of our elected officials. However, they also seem to be without a clue how to change this dismal state of affairs. Although congress and the president currently have the lowest approval rating in the nation's history, the peoples' only solution seems to be to avoid the ballot box. The simple fact that our president continues to badger congress for funds to perpetuate and expand an untenable, immoral and irrelevant war, and then veto funds for health care for our children and seniors is despicable. The fact that our president could use a tragedy like 9/11 to trample all over the constitution is inexcusable. To use such an event to wire tap, eaves drop, incarcerate on suspicion of and seize assets without due process is beyond belief. Many have been sounding the alarm but the vast majority of our citizens either refuse to believe these truths or choose the road to mind numbing apathy.

Perhaps the only hope for our future is another look at our past. To quote one of the most famous of our constitutions framers: "The man who trades freedom for security does not deserve, nor will he receive, either." Ben Franklin spoke these words 240 years ago and if we don't wake up to the reality of the present state of the nation we will find ourselves where we were prior to 1776. The only difference will be the opposition we will be facing will be ourselves.

We are entering a period of consequence. When our senators can blather for hours about the lack of evidence to support global warming what chance do we citizens have of coming to informed decisions? In the final analysis, if our country no longer stands for truth and justice, if only money trips our trigger, are we really any more than severely compromised whores?

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About the Author

Bob Parmelee spent the last of the Vietnam era in a technical college. Unfortunately, big business and the government were being run by some of the most self-serving and corrupt people the nation has ever known. We saw our classmates and friends slaughtered for no good reason then, and I am seeing the same thing today. We need to move beyond the stone age. We need to form a more humane and intelligent partnership with the planet and its denizens.

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