

The Democrats and the Republicans faced a similar dilemma during the primary season. Both parties had a candidate, who if elected, would alienate many potential voters. These voters would stay home on election night, so they would not be able to vote for either party's candidates for the House of Representatives, the Senate or many state offices. As a group, these candidates for office are referred to as down-ticket candidates. Without the votes of the people who are now staying home, a significant number of these downticket candidates would lose elections that they would have won had their party only nominated a less offensive candidate. Of course, the presidential candidates that I am referring to are: Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders.

The Democrats took extraordinary steps to ensure that Hillary would win the nomination and that Bernie would not endanger the election prospects of so many down-ticket candidates. They convinced many democratic politicians with aspirations to be president to sit out this election. Bernie Sanders, and one other candidate who never polled well, were the only opponents that Hillary faced. Also, the Democratic National Committee (DNC) actively tried to help Hillary and hurt her opponents. Emails, released by WikiLeaks, showed DNC officials actively discussing how to hurt Bernie Sanders at the polls. One DNC official even suggested that Bernie Sanders's Jewish faith should be questioned. This is a problem since the DNC was supposed to be unbiased and run a fair election. In the aftermath of the leak, the DNC chair, Debby Wasserman Shultz, was forced to resign.

The down-ticket candidates in the republican party all feared that Trump would get the nomination, thus endangering their own election prospects. Some steps were taken to derail the Trump train. Mitt Romney, the former Republican presidential nominee, spoke out against Trump. However, the Republican National Convention (RNC) never took the types of steps that the Democrats did to prevent a candidate from succeeding, and it seemed to preside over a fair election process.

The Republicans will pay a price for the RNC letting the election play out and not trying to manipulate the results. Many pundits speculate that the Democrats have a very good chance of gaining a majority in the Senate and that they will reduce the size of the Republican majority in the House. Some of these losses are only going to occur because Donald Trump is at the top of the Republican ticket.

The Republican's loss is the country's gain. By being willing to accept an unpalatable candidate, citizens believe that the result is the will of the voters and not the will of some committee. In contrast, citizens will believe that the fix was in for Hillary during the primaries, and they will believe that the primary result was not truly a reflection of the will of the people.

In order for a democratic system like ours to work, people have to believe that the system was fair. People will accept results that do not go their way if they believe that the rules of the contest were fair and that everyone followed the rules. In this case, the losers can direct their frustration toward influencing the next presidential election in four years. If people do not believe that the system is fair, they will not accept losing and our society will experience quite a bit of strife. Even though the Republicans will not look good on election night, and their party will suffer losses, I think they come off looking good in the sense that they oversaw a fair process. I cannot say the same of the Democrats. They will look very good on election night, but their path to this point eroded the faith that people have in our electoral system, and took one more step toward encouraging the civil strife that comes when people do not believe the system is fair.