

Recovery and Reinvention



Independent Candidates, so we may listen to each other.

Traditional party politics no longer serve citizens in small communities

The polarization of American society, driven by hardcore insiders and activists in the major political parties, exacerbates vulnerabilities nationally and locally. I believe that progress is reliant on cooperation, not by one party or interest group “*winning*” with a 50% + 1 majority.

Vilification of one’s political opponent is a built-in feature of the major parties, especially at national and state levels. It’s not an anomaly. Divisive behavior trickles down to local populations. We see it every day on social media, letters to the editor, public meetings and other places where opinions are expressed.

Sadly, partisan party politics have evolved to generate mistrust and paranoia. When people don’t trust the intentions and integrity of others, they assume the worst. That leads to irrational decision making because “*the opposition*” may be putting forth a good idea that’s rejected for no reason except its source.

For example, voters who mistrust an all Democrat (or all Republican) County Commission may not believe important messages, even when they are true. Conservative voters are told to believe that anything said by a liberal politician must be false and vice versa.

The divide is worsened by “*validation media*” whether it’s cable network news, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or other media. Partisans gorge on messages that fit their pre-existing views, rather than considering a wider range of perspectives. In other words, they consume what they agree with, even if it’s false.

Rather than robust discussion and consideration of different ideas, the partisan nature of American politics promotes mistrust and aversion to cooperation – even in La Plata County. If you think this claim is false, you’re not paying attention or you’re the party in power.

Want proof for lack of unity? Look no further than the results of recent county elections:

2018 Elections

Commissioner Clyde Church (DEM)	– elected by 0.08% margin (23 votes)
Recall petition – Gwen Lachelt	– 7,469 signatures (36 too few to be on ballot)

2016 Elections

Commissioner Gwen Lachelt (DEM)	– elected by 2.18% margin
Commissioner Julie Westendorff	– elected by 7.62% margin
1A Tax – Roads & Bridges Funding	– defeated by 4.70% margin

Surely some folks voted against the tax initiative for personal economic reasons. It’s undeniable, however, that a significant portion of the electorate simply did not believe or trust in the Commissioners’ message that the funds were really needed or that they would be spent wisely.

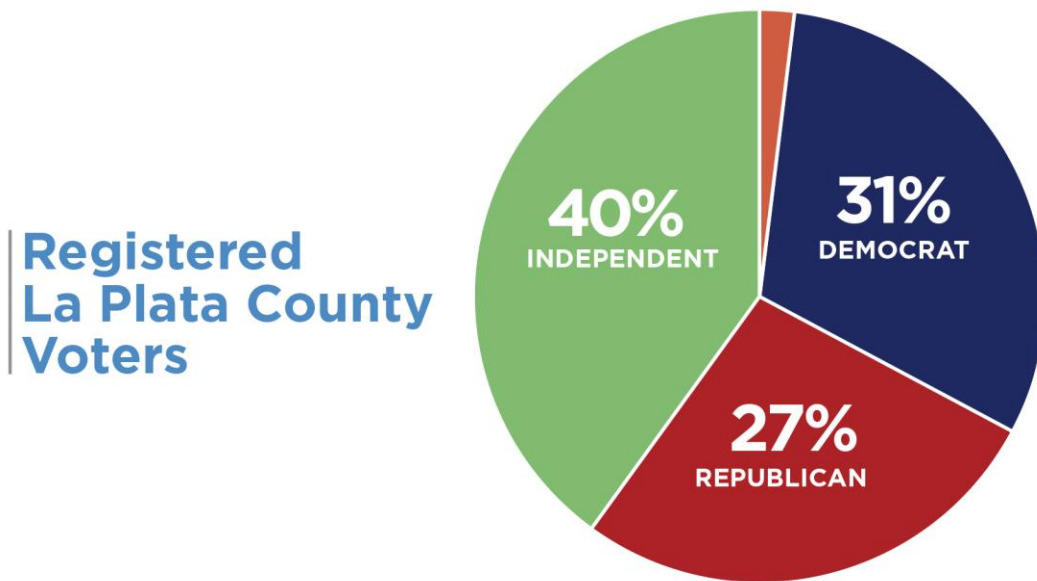
Mistrust and acrimony are exacerbated as one political party accumulates more power and exercises it. This phenomenon is not necessarily because the dominate party is malevolent. It's easy to be dismissive or tone deaf as a political party's power expands.

Regaining broad-based trust is nearly impossible once it's lost.

For example, I know “*conservative*” citizens that believe the sitting County Commissioners will automatically oppose anything they might bring before the county. Likewise, others presume that anything a “*liberal*” proposes will have extra favor. **The facts don't matter, feelings do.**

Neither scenario is good for the people's view of local government.

Here's the makeup of La Plata County registered voters (April 2020):



So why have ALL La Plata County commissioners come from parties that are not in the majority? Why has there never been an independent commissioner who listens to all sides with no party affiliation?

Tradition and election rules have made it difficult to run as an independent. There is no deep well of party connected funding and other support. Election regulations and policies are biased to favor the major parties.

Regardless, right now, as an Independent, I'm offering a new choice and a chance for all of us to hit RESET and do a better job of working with each other on behalf of everyone in La Plata County.

Your support is appreciated.

Jack Turner

INDEPENDENT For County
Commissioner

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