

IF I WERE PRESIDENT  
Wednesday  
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Democracy's definitely an excellent concept, but at the same time, this doesn't mean it isn't without its "issues." One of these issues pertains to the number of people involved in making any individual decision. The more people who become involved, the more opinions you have to deal with, which in turn means the more solutions people are going to want to propose, and in turn, argue about. This doesn't necessarily mean it's a bad thing, unless, of course, you're talking about something which requires both a speedy, and correct solution, in which case, you can pretty much forget it, especially if it's something that involves any amount of common sense.

In examining the challenges facing a modern day President, I started to wonder what I'd do if elected into office. After all, it's easy to criticize someone else's failures and shortcomings, but it's another matter altogether to come up with working solutions. What would I do? How would I go about handling it? And at the end of the day, would it really make a difference one way or the other?

Perhaps one of my biggest complaints with Obama involved his complete failure to do anything to change a system so broken that even he complained about it on more than one occasion. In case you're wondering, I'm referring to the criminal justice system. Specifically, the outrageously lengthy prison sentences handed out for relatively minor offenses, i.e., possession of crack cocaine. As President of the United States, I might not have the power to order individual states to implement any of my changes, but I could certainly act to affect the Federal Justice System, and in so doing, set an example for the individual states.

Since I couldn't change the law on my own, and since it would take years for Congress to do anything, I'd use the powers inherent in the office to establish a number of committees whose sole purpose is to find inmates in federal prison who are the victim of an excessive prison sentence, and who could be safely released back into society. Upon discovering these inmates, I'd use my powers to set them free, either by commuting their sentences or granting them parole, depending upon their individual set of circumstances. It would be my hope that, by doing so, I would light a fire under the collective asses of Congress, so they'd implement the changes necessary to reduce the mandatory minimum sentencing laws currently in effect.

On more than one occasion, President Obama complained about how broken the criminal justice system was, and even alluded to the racist illusion, real or imagined, of racism inherent in the current manner of dispensing justice. Unfortunately, that's about all he did, though. At the end of the day, he completely failed to utilize the powers of his office to create the types of changes he insisted were necessary, and in doing so, he failed us all.

The second thing I'd do is design and build a system of interstate aqueducts, whose sole purpose would be to divert water from areas currently flooding to areas in need of the excess moisture. Naturally, this would require that the water be treated at some point during their journey, so as to avoid transporting harmful organisms, insects, etc., to areas in which they're not native or have no natural predators. The end result, however, would be well worth the effort, and expense, saving billions of dollars in flood damages per year, while at the same time, creating hundreds of thousands of jobs.

Naturally, anything requiring materials and labor will also require funding, and in this case, a great deal of it, however, I believe that this is one of those rare instances in which the project will eventually (and quickly) pay for itself. The more flood waters you can divert, the less emergency resources you've got to pay out for flood relief. The more water you divert, the less damage caused by drought, which in turn reduces the amount of money provided by state and federal governments for drought relief, but it's not just the government that sees an eventual savings in their expenditures. The more floods you can prevent by diverting excess water, the fewer claims presented to insurance companies, which means that both insurance companies and policy holders benefit. Insurance companies benefit because they're not paying out hundreds of millions of dollars in claims every year, savings which should, in theory, be passed along to policy holders.

We've already demonstrated an ability to transport toxic substances, like crude oil, across thousands of miles of land through an elaborate system of pipes, so why not do the same thing with water, either through a similar system of pipes, or a concrete aqueduct system? Either way, a properly designed system has the technology to divert water anywhere it's needed at a moment's notice. Farmers get the water their crops need, underground reservoirs are refilled, flood prone areas see a drastic decrease in the damages caused by floods, taxpayers are saved incalculable amounts of money (as well as state and federal governments) associated with repairing flood damage, all while the unemployment rate is drastically reduced. It's a win/win situation for everyone involved, displaying a great deal of common sense, which is reason enough not to consider it.

Another act I'd immediately implement as President would be to order the immediate discontinuation of fracking in the U.S., and the importing of any natural resources acquired through the use of fracking. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to see that fracking is destroying our environment. It doesn't just make the water exiting your faucet flammable, it also increases the quantity, and severity, of earthquakes, and for good reason. Liquids like oil are the Earth's natural hydraulic fluid, reducing the shock waves traveling throughout the Earth, while at the same time, providing a soft cushion between layers of rock, sediment, etc. Even if crude oil in the Earth's surface didn't do any of this, I'd still be opposed to it, for the simple reason that companies refuse to divulge the ingredients used in the fracking process. So far as I'm concerned, any ingredient a company refuses to divulge needs to be viewed with great skepticism, and a healthy dose of fear, and for good reason. A lack of knowledge means a lack of informed consent, and consent is meaningless without it being informed.

Another thing I'd do is take a look at the import taxes imposed by foreign countries on American goods. Should my investigation reveal that the import taxes imposed on our goods are far in excess of the import taxes imposed on their goods entering our country, then I'd immediately offer them one of two choices: either my country will raise taxes on any and all goods entering our country from theirs until they equal the taxes imposed on our goods entering their country, or order an immediate ban on the importing of any goods from the country in question. There are many nations which have imposed taxes that are outrageously excessive, particularly when compared to the taxes imposed on those same goods entering our country from theirs.

Other changes would include an immediate discontinuation of the so-called "Patriot Act," along with any other law which infringes on the rights of American citizens. It's not just that these laws violate our rights, they do, they're also proof that the terrorists have won. Each successful act of terrorism brings us one step closer to living in the very type of countries we've fought so hard to "liberate." While I still love my country, the America I live in today is a far cry from the America I was born in. Many of the rights I had as a child are nonexistent, a remnant of better times, a fantasy I'll be telling my children and grand children, which saddens me to no end.

What other things would I do? Well, let's just say there are a lot of questions I'd like to see answered. Exactly what **is** Area 51, and does it, or did it ever, house alien artifacts? Did we really land on the moon? Was there a second, or even a third, shooter involved in the Kennedy assassination? And what, if anything, did our elected officials know about 9/11 before it happened?

As far as the hot button of illegal immigration's concerned, I must say that I completely agree with Trump. At least, I agree with him so far as improving our border's security. No country should ever have its borders so open and free that anyone can simply walk in, completely unchallenged. This isn't to say that immigration should be discouraged, it shouldn't, just that immigrants should enter the country in an appropriate manner, and abide by the rules and regulations while living in our country. Of course, this means that we probably need to make arrangements to allow more people to immigrate into the country, to enter this country on work visas, etc. As far as what to do with those who entered this country illegally, that's a difficult question to answer, but at the end of the day, there are two goals. First, to make it easier for people to legally enter this country, while at the same time making it possible to track them while in the country, and deport them should the need arise. At the same time, there's a very real need to find all of the illegal immigrants currently living in this country, and that's not going to ever happen if we continue to treat them as criminals. With that said, I'd implement the changes in regards to entering this country legally, allowing more people to enter per year, and then I'd offer a limited time offer. Register yourself as an illegal immigrant within a specified period of time, at which time you'll be ordered to start paying a fine, or forever lose your chance to become a citizen of this country.

One other change I'd like to impose is all of this free health care and education for illegal immigrants. If you're not a citizen, then you shouldn't be entitled to certain privileges associated with being a legal citizen of this country. It's a simple matter of economics. We're living in a country in which there are hundreds of millions of American citizens in need of some sort of assistance, assistance which requires money to provide, and they can't get the assistance they need because of all the funds being diverted towards providing for illegal immigration. You wouldn't give a squatter living in your neighbor's house money for education and health care without first taking care of your own children, would you? So why are we sitting here taking care of illegal immigrants when so many of our own citizens are in such desperate need of help?

I could go on and on about the things I'd do as President, but by now, I'm sure you get the idea. Unlike many of the politicians currently in office, I actually have some ideas, and a plan on how to impose them, which is why I'll never be elected for office. Well, that, and my felony record, but who knows? Maybe someone, somewhere, will read this and forward at least one of my ideas, like the one about the interstate aqueduct. I think we could all benefit from that.

There's something to be said for democracy. If you don't like the government representing you, you can always vote them out of office when their term is over, assuming, of course, that you can convince enough people there's a better way, but with that said, there's something to be said for a monarchy, or even a tyranny. Putting to the side that most leaders in these types of government turned out to have some serious control issues, they at least had the power to swiftly implement changes without the need to argue for years at-a-time with people who like to argue just to hear themselves talk. They also didn't have to deal with politicians refusing to pass even the best of laws until their own selfish agendas, agendas which help no one, are first passed.

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