



“In case you haven’t noticed, the toxin of partisan politics that was once trapped inside the asylum on the Potomac and bottled up in a few other political hotspots around the country has suddenly been pumped, undiluted, into the national vein.

“Cable news, much of it political and almost all of that partisan; talk radio, some of it virulent; the graceless decline of network news, until it stood undisguised, naked and seemingly unashamed in its ideological partiality; and major metropolitan newspapers, too many of which have given up the ghost of objectivity in their reporting to become obvious and open house organs for political parties – these were the forces that pushed the plunger on the syringe.

“... we suddenly discover that it is no longer possible to cast a vote and run for the sidelines. So, we choose up sides, pin on labels – conservative or liberal, Democrat or Republican – and become emotionally invested in the only thing that is important: winning.

“And of course, the contest, as always, is all or nothing, a tug-of-war to see if we can rip the nation down the middle.”

– Steve Martini, “Shadow of Power,” p. 244

The Problem

We've reached a point in our democracy where:

- 1.** disinformation and lies are rampant
- 2.** science and fact are rejected by a large segment of the population,
- 3.** debate and compromise have given way to unbending ideology and a rejection of opposing viewpoints,
- 4.** political divide has deepened due to **1**, **2**, and **3** and split the nation, and
- 5.** there no longer is a common starting place of agreed-on facts from which differing opinions about these facts can be debated and, through compromise, public policy can be crafted without running into the obstacles of **1**, **2**, and **3** and "gotcha politics."

It's a sad day in our nation.

As President Biden said in his Inaugural speech, “we must reject the culture in which facts themselves are manipulated and even manufactured.”