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A Plea to ALL Candidates for Civility

The opening of the school year is always filled with the promise of a fresh new start. New crayons and notebooks carried on the backs of our future enter freshly cleaned classrooms. Each step toward the future moves the past further away, and each student has the renewed opportunity to decide on success for the coming year. As we move into fall, we in the elections business are reminded of the opening of campaign season and the upcoming 2020 election cycle. Like our students in new sneakers, candidates, too, have a choice about the success of the coming year. Will they conduct their campaigns, discussions, and debates in a manner that promotes civility in the public discourse? I'm hopeful that candidates will realize that campaign conduct, in both spoken and written words, sets an example for both our youth and our great nation which deserve better.

In the upcoming election cycle, I challenge every candidate, social media user, civic and social organization, neighborhood, golf club, co-workers, bowling leagues, et cetera, to freely debate political issues through civil discourse in a manner which neither appeals to racial, ethnic, religious, sexual or other prejudices, nor promotes further polarization of the electorate as it relates to voting and elections. I think we have seen firsthand the adverse long-term moral and social impact of negative campaigns, and the toll of divisiveness and discord as it relates to our daily lives. The citizens of our nation demand and deserve unbiased information on which to choose their leadership. Call me old school, but I yearn for a day when candidates served as visionaries for the greater good by focusing on their positions and views rather than their opponent's shortcomings. Our country is weary of personal attacks, insulting and inappropriate language, shoddy campaign practices of misrepresentation, intimidation, and unfounded accusations. In our urge to Share, Like and re-Tweet, let us not forget the nefarious cyber actors during the 2016 election who sought to polarize Americans using social media. It is believed these attempts to meddle in our elections will continue during the upcoming cycle.

George Washington and John Adams warned of a divided republic in opposition to each other. One of my favorite quotes comes from Harry S. Truman, "America was not built on fear - America was built on courage, on imagination and an unbeatable determination to do the job at hand." Let's all go back to school as we move forward with the job at hand, with a mindfulness about the lesson we're teaching, and a conduct that chooses success for the future over justification of the past.

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