Local politics is where reform starts

With the out-of-area robocalls still ringing in our ears, it's a good time to reflect on what went wrong and right with the mount-est election - and what to do about it. Local politics is the real local. It's like local vs. everything else. As we have noted before, when your friends and neighbors are on the ballot or campaign, that's the time to form an opinion and write a natty letter to the editor or hiring a campaign manager to hand out mailers with robocalls during dinnertime.

The trick is to get enough information about candidates from reliable news sources, graduate programs or even just ads that list all the candidates for the town with confidence that no matter how the election turns out, citizens have made informed choices in a local government that, by and large, is working for them. How do we know if Flagstaff fits the model above? When voters pass by wide margins not one but many tax measures, it's hard to claim it's not working. It's clear they are framing and weighing tough choices more policy choices than just low-pocketbook issues. That's what democracy is supposed to be about, and it involves some smart voters who cast, voters and votes alike. We salute both of those groups on an election well-won and well-decided, despite the noise from the cable campaign.

The conduct of those races was once again more than just a local disappointing - they arrived at further isolate voters in cities like Flagstaff from engaging with elected officials on local off issues that necessarily follows a campaign. Why would voters trust their lives to elected officials who later office to misleading, shallow ads by deep-pocketed special interests who refuse to be identified? And the part time they might be asking their local representatives, would the vote at all, especially when the new types of elected officials are there to represent an unyielding and thus unable to work a comprehensive grand plan.

The main problem is that the people who can what all, or even the majority of people, are two very few who have benefited from it. It's no wonder the election reform, open primaries and term limits are falling too many in status. They say that politics is local, and that's where fundamental reform apparently is going to have its first chance.

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BY JAY AMBROSE

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