

Your Top Ten Policy Issues—and the Winners Are ...

Contributed by PT Editors
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While PT's servers never approached meltdown, a number of our readers sent in their choices for our "Top 10" policy issues. We have our own ideas, but wanted to know yours. Throughout the comments—and those posted on the site and received by e-mail—there was a similar undercurrent: that as a nation, we have been ill served by the lack of intelligent debate on issues that concern us most.

But, here you go—the sealed envelope, please. Let's start with the easy ones: (1) Education and (2) Healthcare. Writes Lisa Buhler, "I would like to see a discussion on the healthcare system—national healthcare has not worked for other countries—why would it work for ours? I would also like to see discussion on the "no child left behind" program—clearly it is not working like it was intended. It has forced our educators to teach to the "lowest common denominator" in the classroom—we are not challenging our young people!"

Common to both issues is "equality of opportunity," though Dana Clouston is a little extreme when she says, "it is wrong that some people start off their lives with billions before they even lift a finger to create, earn, save or make any capital themselves, while others never receive any such gifted or inherited capital."

Inequality at birth is neither right nor wrong—it's a fact of life. Society's challenge, though, to compensate by providing equal opportunity for those who want to improve their lives.

We agree with Sam Clovis that (3) Federalism belongs on the list: "Federalism is really the key concern, because governance of the country encompasses so many of the other issues identified. National government involvement in education, energy, civil rights, criminal justice, infrastructure, elections, and most perniciously, grant programs. To move ahead, perhaps we need to fix what was broken with federalism during the 60's and 70's when congress and the executive branch decided only they held the wisdom to solve the nation's challenges."

And, we'll take three from Professor Edward Kokklenberg: (4) Energy, (5) Immigration, and (6) Infrastructure. And, while it's not yet on the list, we couldn't agree more with his other suggestion: "The method of selecting presidential contenders is poor; we spend a huge amount of time and money and in the end, we do no better and sometimes worse than other countries. Why? What can and should be done?"

The environment is certainly an important topic, but policy issues are ultimately framed in terms of infrastructure and energy: global warming and protecting our planet are directly linked to our energy policies and transportation infrastructure.

Finally, we pick up UK Parliamentary candidate Rene Kinzett's interest in (7) US Foreign Policy, "foreign policy matters rank very high for me. Many of us in the UK who support the US in so many ways are often left without any real answers for critics of the US in terms of its willingness to act in some areas of the globe (perhaps too quickly) and its lack of interest in other very real and awful examples of human rights abuses, genocide and despotism."

And, we know that NCSL's Bill Pound would certainly warm to Ms. Kinzett's comment, "from the perspective of a British politician, I find the debate you are having on the ID cards proposal fascinating. We are also having this debate—a costly, unworkable, easily avoided/abused and highly intrusive system of state—organised snooping. It will be the innocent and law abiding who pay for it and it will do nothing to stop organised crime, terrorism or illegal immigration—and"

That, of course, leaves our list a little short—though not without enough to keep PT's editors and contributors busy—well into the next decade!

So, we'll start with Education: what, indeed, should be the objectives—the underlying principles—of US policy on education?

For some answers, read this issue's feature story, [Education Policy: Q&A with CA Senator Jack Scott](#).