Secession Is a Solution for Deep Political Division

Written by Ryan Miller.

Sometimes in a relationship you just need to go your separate ways. Sometimes it gets to the point where you lose the joy that brought you together and maintaining the relationship becomes a hellish ordeal. If you try to duke it out for too long resentment builds. Resentment will eventually turn to hate. At this point, when just sheer momentum is holding you together and nothing more, all you experience is pain.

It’s not you, it’s me.

This situation is as true for romantic relationships as it is for all others. But the most enduring relationship, one that conventional wisdom doesn’t even allow us to question, is the political one that binds us to everyone else around us.

Except by great effort and expense, we don’t typically get to choose our partners in a political relationship. We are born into it. There’s no courtship, no taking into account of our personal preferences. It just is.

And like a romantic relationship gone sour, this forced betrothal to the hundreds of millions around us is the principal cause of society’s problems. Unable to go our separate ways from people we don’t like or who we don’t agree with, resentment builds. And as we see particularly with the current election, that resentment eventually turns into hate.

It is surprising how civil people are to one another when they are not bound to them.

The market is a prime example of this. With people free to interact socially or economically, or not, with those around them we see a relatively peaceful, civil, and courteous environment. If I don’t like you or the way you do business then I don’t have to associate with you (modern “civil rights” laws notwithstanding). We’re polite to each other (hopefully), we part ways, and we go back to being happy.

Contrast this with politics.

Why One Ruler for All?

Political ideas often go right to the core of people. Many hold their political ideas as a key part of their identity and as such they are extremely important to them. But in politics you are prevented from solely interacting with, and building a community with people who have similar values and political ideas. We are forced to hear and live under ideas that we may find repulsive or even inhuman.

The slavers were forced to live under the same roof as the abolitionists, the pro-lifers with the pro-choicers, the Left with the Right, the Trump crazies with the Clinton lunatics, individualists with collectivists, the pro-liberty people with everyone else, and the list goes on and on.

But why?

Why do we need to submit to people and ideas that go against our own convictions?

Sometimes you just need to say, “Hey, you’re a good person and I wish you the best, but I just feel like I need to go my own way. It’s not you, it’s me.”

Think of how much more peaceful the world would be if we were allowed to make this decision for ourselves. Think if every region, state, city, and individual were allowed the freedom to build or be a part of a society based around their own values and those of like-minded people. The animosity that builds as a result of having to tolerate and accept the ideas which we perceive as wrong or harmful would largely disappear. You would still not like people, and their ideas might still bother you, but you wouldn’t have to live with them, and you wouldn’t be subject to their political force.

In a word, what I am describing is secession: the severing of political ties to an entity or group that you no longer wish to be associated with. This is an idea that everyone should be able to get behind. But for some reason it is considered so far beyond conventional political discourse, beyond the Overton Window, that it isn’t even thought of.

In spite of this, we do have historical examples that school teaches us to look favorably upon. Namely, the American Revolution, Texas Revolution, The Hartford Convention, and the proposed Abolitionist Secession prior to the Civil War. Our most modern example (though perhaps not looked upon favorably by the establishment) is the secession of the UK from the European Union.

These attempted and successful secession movements were simply groups of people no longer satisfied with the existing political order and wishing to go their separate ways. And though the term “secession” has been tainted since the Southern States’ fateful attempt to leave the Union, we need to understand that the term merely denotes the innocuous idea of people building a political and economic order that is more in line with their values.

Denial and Disgust

This election is sufficient to show us the necessity of the principle of secession. The amount of hostility around the candidates and their supporters is bringing the political order to the breaking point. There is going to be more opposition, denial, and disgust than we have ever seen since perhaps the Election of 1860. And we all know how that one ended.

But is it so crazy to think that maybe people should be allowed to set up political and governance systems that are more in tune with what they hold dear? What is the point of forcibly binding together people who never see eye to eye on anything, and who have a relationship that is increasingly spilling over into pure and open hatred?

Like a romantic relationship whose time has come, maybe the time has come to at least discuss a divorce of some of our political relationships. 320 million people is a political love-entanglement gone way too far.

Cut out the things we don’t like. Remove the things that cause us pain and go from there. This is how most of us try to live every other area of our lives.

Let’s try it for politics.

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