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Our
VIEW

Betting on Bill

Hoppner best choice for Nebraska governor

No knight-on-a-white-horse gubernatorial candidate will ride roughshod over polling boxes this Election Day.

Both Republican candidate Mike Johanns and Democratic candidate Bill Hoppner have their highlights and low points. Election returns could reflect that.

Both candidates are dynamic and could enact some positive change for the state — but we think one candidate could better lead the state into the next century.

Since 1991, Johanns has impressed many Lincolinites with his down-to-earth, introverted charm and intense work ethic. He gets credit for taking the risks that kicked off serious downtown revitalization.

He's canvassed this state. He loves Nebraska and America. He's real and sincere.

But he lacks a certain dynamism and hard-line decisiveness we think Nebraska's next leader must possess, especially when the state is looking down the double barrel of a continuing farm crisis and popular pressure to slow funding of higher education.

Hoppner has this decisiveness, as well as a catchy idealism and personal energy reminiscent of some of the most popular politicians in recent history. He sets his mind on an ideal or a political action — helping farmers or defeating Initiative 413, for example — and he doesn't waver.

He lacks practice as a politician — the 48-year-old has never held an elected political office — but he's worked behind the scenes for Nebraska political heavyweights, former U.S. Sens. J.J. Exon and Bob Kerrey.

He now enjoys the endorsements of Exon, Kerrey, former Gov. Frank Morrison and current Gov. Ben Nelson, whose job in office we commend. He also has garnered support from the Nebraska Fraternal Order of Police.

Johanns lacks the backing of local police, who disapprove of his condoning concealed-weapons bills. He's got the State Troopers Association, though. Troopers got mad when Hoppner suggested he would appoint Barney Fifa to lead the State Patrol. (We college folk still appreciate humor.)

We also admire Hoppner's endearing compassion for the downtrodden — for the little guy with no voice in big-money politicking — and his respect for First Amendment rights.

We don't like that Johanns approved a Christian evangelic parade but didn't approve a gay rights parade. First Amendment freedoms are serious matters that should be applied unilaterally, not according to one political stance or personal opinion.

Most importantly, we believe Hoppner will best protect higher education in the state, as pressures build to slash taxes and to halt or reverse university funding increases.

Hoppner is the students', farmers' and academicians' best candidate for Nebraska's future.

Mook's
VIEW



Adding to apathy

Political advertisements part of the problem



CLIFF HICKS is a senior news-editorial and English major and the Daily Nebraskan opinion editor.

I never thought I'd voluntarily go against the Constitution, but, hell, here I am.

America is broken. The American lifestyle has been fractured by money, greed, corruption, industry and self-centered power.

Here's the part where I go against the Constitution: Maybe politics shouldn't include advertising.

I know that is inherently wrong because money is free speech. That's what the courts determined and my political science class dictated.

Consider this: What would politics be like without the power of the almighty dollar?

No more badmouthing your opponent because you have more money than he does. Simply because you think your opponent's ideas are bad, you can't spend your entire budget to complain about him, just like you can't pitch your own ideas on paid bulletin boards across the nation.

Think of it like this — advertising is a vicious beast. Any way advertisers can get your attention, they will. Whether it's constant repetition or sharp, biting slogans, advertisers want something from you. They want you to listen and remember.

Ad campaigns can be subtle or they can beat you over the head with constant repetition. For example, take a long look at the recent ads the Republicans have run.

"Our president lied to us. Vote Republican."

Oh yeah, those Republicans are upholding the moral high ground in this nation.

Now, don't get me wrong and think I'm with the Democrats either. While I prefer the Democrats over Republicans, I'm starting to believe I'm Libertarian. You can do what you want as long as it doesn't harm me.

Party-line politics aren't the biggest problem with the country, though.

The biggest problem is that America is comprised of idiots.

People who vote often are led by these ads. Most people who vote say they are voting against a candidate, not for one.

No one stands on their ideas anymore. They stand on platforms condemning their opponents.

And America is sick of it.

Look at the voter turnout. Look at the polls. Look at how people feel about politics.

We're sick of it. We don't want to see the ads any more. We don't want to hear them sling mud anymore. We don't want a lot of things in politics.

What's wrong with us?

What the hell do we want?

We want noble politicians who represent us.

We want rights protected and our wrongs righted.

We want lower taxes and more safety.

We want America to be a great place again.

We want a heck of a lot.

And we don't want to give a damn thing.

Politicians can't have our time. We can't give them a few minutes out of our day to think about what we want and how to get it.

People are so dissatisfied with politics, the advertising is only making things worse.

Nebraska's turnout this year will be one of its highest in an off-year, mainly because of Initiatives 413 and 414.

And it's still not even going to be 75 percent of the registered voters, not to mention the many people who aren't registered to vote.

We're bitter. We're angry. We're timid. We feel powerless.

The problem is that we shouldn't be powerless.

It's a government for the people, by the people, of the people.

How do we fix all of this?

Voting's a good place to start.

It sounds so simple, and yet, so much is neglected. But the key isn't to vote the way that you're trained to, but the way

you want to. If the smallest candidate with no chance of winning is your choice, vote for him or her.

Maybe more people will start to agree with you.

Two political parties don't cut it. We need another solution.

Maybe it's time for another party or two. Or more.

Limiting advertising is another possibility. It sounds malicious, but if you honestly think your ideas can stand on their own merits, then let them do so.

The sad part is that the yelling works. Abusive ad campaigns work. Smear tactics work.

We hate to hear them, but they stick with us.

And if they were to stop, so would the votes.

People vote out of spite these days. They want the bad guys out of office, so they find the lesser of the two evils.

But there shouldn't be evil at all. It's our government. We're supposed to be the greatest country in the world.

I used to think we were, when I was younger.

Now I'm disillusioned like the rest of the nation. There's no one in Congress representing me, and I feel powerless — like the rest of America.

If we cut political ads off, activity will fall for a while. Maybe it'll rise again. Maybe not.

But I'm starting to think we owe it to ourselves to try.



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