

Turning Circular Arguments into Success

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December 8th, 2015

Here we go again. It's election time.

STOP – ask yourself what went through your mind when you read that line. Did you think about the mayor? A state senator? Your Representative in Washington?

If you're like most people, you thought of the presidential election. That's not what was written, but it's probably what jumped into your head.

Why is that? How is it that we focus so much on the election of one man? And when he succeeds or fails, why do we heap praise or damnation on only one man?

This isn't a football team where we can blame the coach or the quarterback. It's not a baseball team where we can blame or praise the pitcher.

This is a nation: a representative republic. It is a nation which relies on the wisdom of more than 500 men as a better way of running things. Five hundred men, arguing about what to do, is better than one man dictating what is to be done – at least that's the premise. So how did we get to the point where everything rests on the shoulders of the president?

Promises - Presidential candidates make promises. If the candidate wins by more than a half percentage point, there is the strong probability that he will claim that he won because of his promises. The promises then magically turn into a mandate from the people. Now, the newly elected president can go to Congress and tell the House and Senate that the people will hate them if they don't support his mandate.

Well, elected people don't want to be hated by the electors, so they go along. If the project is successful, the president gets the praise. If it fails, it can only fail because Congress didn't follow the mandate of the people. Failure is the fault of Congress.

It's true: If America fails, it will be Congress' fault. Congress, however, is our fault.

The next time you hear the words "It's election time," think of your senator and representative, not the next president.