

Body of Evidence

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Do you know the name of your senator or representative in either the state or federal government? The body of evidence would indicate that you may not have one. In the past few years I can testify that I have heard the statements quoted in this article from the mouths of both Democrats and Republicans.

“Say whatever you need to say in order to get elected. After that, you can do whatever you want.” ~ State Senator. The Senator went on to explain that the wishes of the Party would replace a candidate’s campaign agenda once elected.

“A Congressman represents the people until he gets elected. Then he represents the Party.” ~ Member of the U.S. House of Representatives.

“For the first ten years as a Congressman, you just do what you’re told.” ~ Member of the U.S. House of Representatives.

The previous two quotes are evidence that, in Washington, the party machinery, not district loyalty, is what determines a Representative’s stance on issues.

“We need a twelve year term in the House because it takes eight years just to learn the system.” ~ Member of the State House of Representatives. This statement was made in exasperation over the current limits on the number of terms allowed for Florida State legislators.

“What our members in the House don’t understand is that they represent us, not their district.” ~ Member of the board of directors of the state party. This was said as a Party official bemoaned the renegade behavior of a newly elected Representative who had won largely because of the support of the Tea Party groups.

“I was given the bills I was to sponsor by the Speaker of the House.” ~ Member of the State House of Representatives. The Representative was heard saying this while explaining why a bill promised in the campaign had not been filed.

The body of evidence provided in these quotes is such that we may surmise that we no longer live in a representative democracy.

There is no conclusion to this article. The evidence speaks for itself. In lieu of a conclusion, I pose a question: If we fail to maintain our representative democracy, what shall we have instead?