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2020 Reimagining

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Personal reflections on this election

Dan McCready [info@danmccready.com]

Sent: Wednesday, November 18, 2020 3:39 PM

To: Steve Johnston


DAN MCCREADY

Dear Steve,

Change is slow.

Make no mistake, I'm as thankful as you are for Trump's defeat this month. But how I'd hoped for more change on Election Day! Like you, I'd hoped to see Democratic majorities that could fix our elections, provide health care to millions, and protect our planet. I'd hoped, most of all, for a repudiation of not just Trump, but Trumpism itself, to usher in a healing in our divisive politics.

Instead, I spent election week glued to cable news, following results that were too close to call, eating junk food and staying up late. While Americans rejected Trump, they didn't reject the hateful politics that he stood for. Trump's acolytes won reelection across America. Few Republican politicians accepted the networks' calls of Biden's victory. I could see writing on the wall for 2022 and 2024, and it wasn't pretty.



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Message of Election 2020: Trump Lost, but Trumpism Did Not

One takeaway from Election 2020 is that while President Donald Trump lost,...

When the weekend came, I escaped to the North Carolina mountains with my family and friends. The weather was perfect, sixty-five degrees and sunny. But I couldn't help but imagine myself in some dark war movie.

There I was, resting with my platoon at the base of the hill in front of me. Time and time again, we'd tried to take that hill. We'd lost parts of ourselves to it. The

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hilltop was still smoldering. Now, we listened over the radio to the news of a great far-away victory. We breathed a sigh of relief. But on the next hill over, and on hills far away, we heard more guns. Ours had felt like a great battle. But it was really just a small skirmish. The battle for the soul of America, to use President-elect Biden's phrase, would go on for years.

Something tells me you weren't thinking about war movies after Election Day. But my guess is you were thinking about this hard truth: no matter how hard we fight, change is slow.

Most of you know my story. Before Trump burst on the scene, I'd never been "political." I spent my time building my solar energy business and my raising three, soon to be four, little kids. Then, the night after Trump was elected, I lay awake in bed, feeling the country I loved being torn apart. And my life trajectory began to change.

I'd planned to tell my then five-year-old, Anna Glenn, the news of the first female president. When my wife, Laura, had talked with her about Hillary Clinton, Anna Glenn's face lit up. See, a girl could be anything she wanted, Laura said. But when I opened Anna Glenn's door the morning after Election Day to find an innocent girl asleep, her little school clothes laid out by her bed, I couldn't find the words to break the news. So I found Laura, who was getting dressed. We held each other and cried.

Our tears didn't last long — I felt a calling to serve, to try to bring our country together. In the Marine Corps, we never cared about where you came from, the color of your skin, or your party affiliation. We were Americans, first. I had to do all I could now to fight back for my country.

This was my story. But each of you have your own stories, your own callings, your own reasons for joining the fight. Many of you, like me, were new recruits. You'd never worked with a political campaign before. Over the next year, you began to give money, make calls, and knock on doors. Many of you deserved a medal. Look at Carolyn Eberly of Union County, the deep-red exurb of Charlotte. She turned a meeting with a few friends at her dining room table into a local Indivisible chapter with hundreds of volunteers!



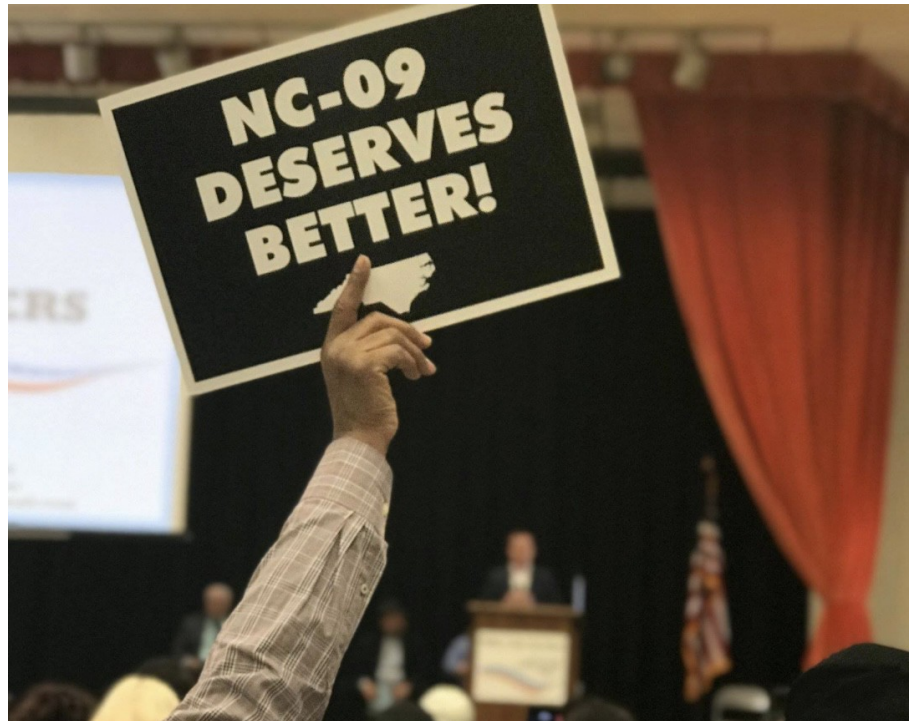


Carolyn Eberly, founder of Indivisible NC District 9, rallies supporters to knock doors.

One by one, we joined up. Some of you called it the resistance. To me, it really felt like my old platoon, with each of us fighting alongside one another for our democracy. North Carolina's 9th District was a steep hill. It was viciously gerrymandered — a Democrat hadn't held it since 1963. But we gave it our all. By 2018, we'd made it one of the closest races in the country.

And boy, did we battle it out! We charged straight into the teeth of the Republican political machine. When we ran into Republican election fraud, we were aghast. We saw cheating and systemic racism that were deeper than most of us with white privilege had understood. But we charged ahead. We exposed the fraud and overturned the election, making history. In the 2019 redo election, we faced an even more hateful opponent, along with Trump himself. Still, we kept the faith. You knocked hundreds of thousands of doors, rain or shine!

In the end, we ran ten points ahead of Trump's 2016 margin. We'd turned longtime Republican areas blue, from Charlotte to rural North Carolina. We'd built unprecedented progressive energy and infrastructure in red areas, which helped Democrats break the Republican supermajority in Raleigh in 2018. Most of all, by leading with our values, we'd showed that, yes, our country can still come together! But still, we'd not taken the hill. So we regrouped, and when 2020 came, we charged again.



Residents of North Carolina's 9th Congressional District rally against election fraud in Bladen County.

Even through a pandemic, we did all we could to support candidates up and down the ballot for the 2020 election. Finally, thanks in part to the activism of millions of likeminded volunteers across America, the American people stood

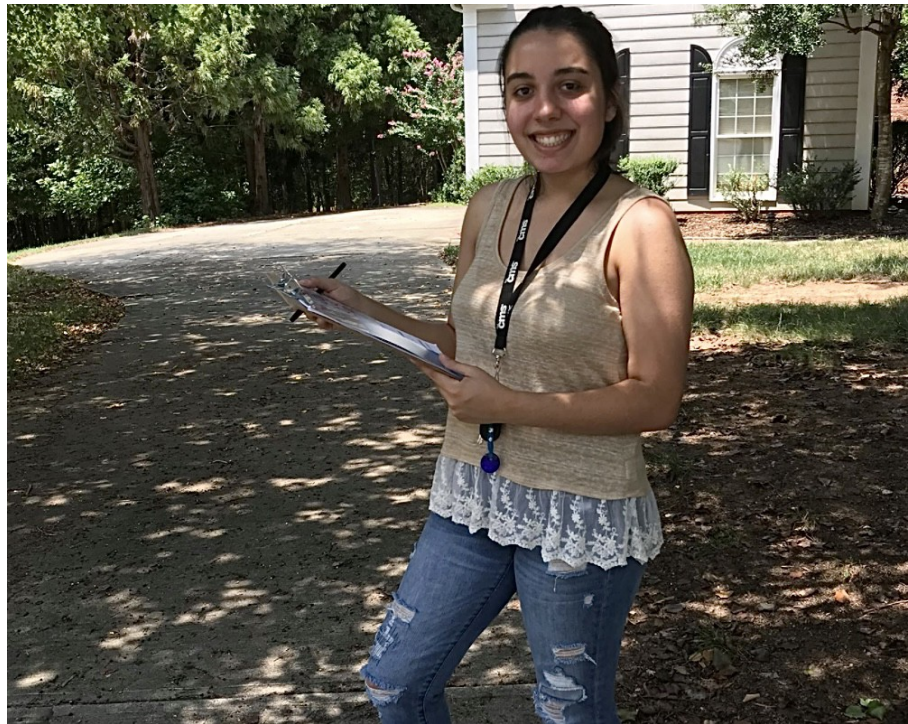
up for our democracy, replacing Trump with a uniter. At his side was a woman who would be the first female vice president — and the first woman of color in the White House.

But when we celebrated, we saw that the battle was still not over. Some of us had known this already. John Kibler, also from Union County, had been knocking doors since 1973. Some of you had been fighting for civil rights since the sixties. But it was clear to all of us now: it was a long battle for our nation's soul.

How do we process this?

I'm still sorting through it. For me, it's been helpful to remember why we do this. We've seen up close and personal the fragility of American democracy. After the election fraud and cover-ups in Bladen County, we've seen this in ways that few others have. We've also seen — and proven — what it takes to save our democracy: everyday people stepping up to save it.

By God, it's an honor to do what we do. Fighting alongside you has been the honor of my life. If I woke up to find myself lying in bed the night after the 2016 election, I'd do it all over again. When I'm old and nearing the end, I'll tell my kids and my grandkids the stories of how we helped save our democracy. You'll tell them these stories, too.



Canvassing in action!

Friends, it's been a long four years, but now is not the time to give up the fight. With Georgia's U.S. Senate races right around the corner, control of the Senate hangs in the balance — and with it, the chance for President-elect Biden to make desperately-needed reforms. I hope you'll volunteer for Reverend Warnock's and Jon Ossoff's campaigns. And I hope you'll take hope in Biden's win in Georgia — and the local organizing that enabled it — which has shown

us what can happen in North Carolina, if only we stick with it.

With our hard-fought experience, our faith in our values, and our commitment to never forget any voter or district — no matter how red — let’s keep growing our party. The next wave is going to take new recruits. It may sound strange, but we’re all veterans now. That means it’s on us to recruit them. Let’s keep pulling in young people and people from all backgrounds. Together, let’s keep up the fight for a more perfect union.

See you on a Zoom call soon,

Dan

Paid for by McCready for Congress

Dan McCready is a former member of the United States Marines. Use of his military rank, job titles, and photographs in uniform does not imply endorsement by the Marines or the Department of Defense. This email was sent to sjohnston@tuesdayforumcharlotte.org. Click [here](#) if you'd like to unsubscribe. We try to send only the most important information and opportunities to participate via email.