

Where's Bluto Blutarsky when he's needed most?

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ALTOONA, WI - I hear it or see it every day. Somebody says it at a meeting. Or posts it as a comment on an Internet message board or social media site. It's imbedded in a question asked at some public forum. It is on a sign at a demonstration.

Democracy in America has been killed. It's dead. It's over.

I disagree for a whole bunch of reasons, not the least of which is that democracy is [more verb than noun](#)

and verbs can't be killed. Democracy lives as long as there are at least some among us who are doing it.

There's no overlooking the fact that democracy is gravely ill in many respects, however. Democracy is dependent on many things, but none more important than the consent of the governed. What passes for consent of the governed nowadays is frightening when you consider what most Americans [think of those doing the governing](#) and further consider how elected officials demonstrate that they [don't care](#) what the general public thinks.

The two major parties have very different ways of dealing with these troubling conditions. The Democrats run scared. There is a long list of things they believe but won't say and things they would like to do but don't. The Republicans run roughshod. Their answer for pretty much everything is more tax cuts primarily benefiting the rich and more government deregulation. Regardless of what the public wants, that's what Republicans do. They are one-trick ponies, even though the trick has only [made the rich vastly richer](#), the poor poorer, and [the middle class disappear](#)

. For decades now it hasn't produced the widespread prosperity they promise, yet they don't try anything different. They double down on their one trick.

In Wisconsin, a governor who swears up and down he is [not a career politician](#) but who has spent his adult life holding one public office or another while running for a higher one is unfazed by the fact that the state [leads the nation in shrinkage of the middle class](#) and undaunted by news that people are [fleeing Wisconsin](#) in large numbers. He insists his policies are working and the state is mounting a "[comeback](#)" under his regime, despite [new waves of layoffs](#) coming on the heels of dismal reports of heavy job losses [year](#) after [year](#) after [year](#) during his time in office.

Democrats are reluctant to offer a bold alternative and steer a different course. They have little confidence in the appeal of their ideas. Republicans are showing telltale signs that they know the public is growing less and less likely to keep buying what they are selling. Why else would they feel the need to go to such extreme lengths to [suppress voting](#), [stack the courts](#) and [rig elections by gerrymandering](#) political boundaries?

It's easy to look at these assaults on democracy and their devastating effects and conclude that it's over. But it's useful to remember that voter suppression and court stacking and partisan gerrymandering were not invented in the last few years. These tactics are as old as the republic. They've been put to use by crooked politicians for ages, and they've been overcome many times by past generations of citizens.

As Bluto Blutarsky's [Germans bombed Pearl Harbor rant](#) comically reminds us, nothing is over until we decide it is.

Every day I hear or see "RIP democracy." Maybe the best response is simply "GBPH."

Tags: Untagged