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# Debate not division

BY GREG HAWKINS  
GUEST EDITORIAL

For 20 months I traveled the state as a Republican running against Republican incumbents. I missed a primary with Orrin Hatch by 54 votes at the Utah Republican Convention. Glen Davis surprised everyone at the convention (including me) when he nominated me to run with him as lieutenant governor against Mike Leavitt. On June 27, nearly 75,000 people voted for Glen and me. In both races, we came in just shy of 40 percent.

The press have speculated that our successes prove there is a division in the Utah Republican party. However, I believe what is actually occurring is an increasing interest and scrutiny of government.

The Republican Party believes government belongs to the people and should be open to scrutiny and therefore invites public debate, disagreement, even dissent. To their credit, I was never criticized or asked not to run by my opponents, party officials, or by anyone who understands what it means to be Republican. There is a difference between debate within the party and the division of the party.

Without public scrutiny and debate, the temptation to practice sleight of hand, backroom closed-door politics would be too great even for the most

honorable to withstand. Public debate keeps the party, the state and the nation healthy, strong and free. More than any other issue, I have voiced support for open government and public debate.

The Republican Party embraces this ideal. Public debate engages the interest, attention and participation of the people. If sovereignty, the power of government, is to remain with the people, then public debate is the key.

I traveled statewide to stimulate debate and bring about changes in government we desperately need. I appreciate the strong feelings that are felt by many in this state.

I heard the message of the nearly 75,000 who cast their vote for us on June 27.

I'm not finished; the battle is not over; there remains much to be done.

Nevertheless, I embrace the Republican Party and its principles. I believe change will come by working within the party. I applaud those strong voices in the Republican Party who invite "moderates" and "conservatives" alike to engage in the debate and who are not afraid of independent thinking. I, therefore, will continue to work within the Republican Party to support Republican candidates and to engage in the public debate.

*(Greg Hawkins is a former Republican candidate for U.S. Senate and lieutenant governor.)*

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