

# Naderites learn the hard way

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Gore and Bush' — or was it 'Bore and Gush' — make me want to 'Ralph'" was a popular slogan for Ralph Nader, the popular liberal and Green Party candidate who probably drew votes in key states from enough would-be Gore voters to cost Gore, a more moderate liberal, those states and thus the election.

He emphasized the similarities between Gore and Bush, maintaining that it didn't matter which "Republocrat" won, and that a better use of your vote would be to support Nader.

Things couldn't have turned out worse for the Naderites. Their man fell short of his goal of 5 percent of the popular vote, which would have gotten his party matching federal funds worth millions of dollars for the 2004 election.

Furthermore, they paved the road to the White House for Bush, who has already demonstrated great differences from the would've-been Gore administration — differences Naderites should not be pleased with.

For example, Bush's energy policy has championed increased production, while Gore favored conservation, a stance more like Nader's.

Though Bush's energy policy pays lip service to conservation, his determination to drill for oil off the Gulf Coast and in the Arctic National Wildlife Reserve and his handling of California's energy crisis underscore his commitment to preserving the status quo of high energy consumption. Though Gore is no energy saint, he, like Nader, wouldn't have called for drilling in these environmentally sensitive areas and would have suggested conservation as a means of mitigating California's early summer blackouts.

Another notable difference between the Bush administration and either the Gore or the Naderite platform is the Bush tax cut. Gore and Nader both preferred saving the surplus for civic purposes.

Though Gore and Nader had somewhat different focuses, they both emphasized the importance of things like health care and social equality. They would also agree that the Bush tax cut is unfortunately skewed in favor of wealthier Americans, which already appears to be leaving the federal government with insufficient funds to operate many important programs.

A sad irony is that campaign reform, dear to Nader, seems to have died with Gore's

chance of election. For once Congress seemed capable of passing a soft money ban, yet Bush fought it tooth and nail. Gore had promised it would've been the first bill he sent to Congress.

Such reform is vital to Nader's interests because it levels the playing field between "Republocrats" and third-party candidates, facilitating future electoral success for Nader.

While it is commendable that so many supported Nader in his quest to reform our political system, they must appreciate that these reforms have yet to be enacted.

In order to achieve their goals, they must learn to use the political system as is. However unattractive voting for Gore may have seemed to them, it would've been a means justified by an ultimate end.

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