

## My Two Friends

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I have these two friends, both of whom claim to be Conservatives. Yet, they disagree much of the time. Not all of the time, maybe not even most of the time, but frequently. What is striking is that when they do disagree, they become not-quite-angry, but I think they are holding it in. Fortunately, or unfortunately, I am in the middle. Mind you, the two friends consider themselves friends as well.

The best part about me and my two friends is that we can disagree without resorting to name-calling and being derisive. The three of us are able to stifle our emotional rejection of an opinion and put forth a logical counterpoint. This is why we're still friends. What we have in common is a recognition that the nation is in disrepair. What we are most often at odds about, is what repairs are needed. None of us are in a position to actually invoke any of the repairs, so our talks are generally more along the lines of pipe dreams than action plans.

One of these friends is a very stout Constitutional Conservative. He believes strongly in the word as written or revised by amendment. All deviations and interpretations are offensive to his sensibilities.

The other friend once claimed to be a Libertarian, but I don't know what he is now. He used to be a registered Republican and was even a member of the Executive Committee.

For myself, I have dug into the Constitution, and the study of government in general, enough to claim the position of Governmental Philosopher. I focus on the 'why' of what the Constitution says, and not just the words.

My first friend is very predictable. His focus is narrow and precise.

My second friend is different. It took me a few years to finally piece together his widely variable opinions. In some instances, he is quite conservative and in others, he is downright Progressive, in the Social Democrat meaning of the word. But, in my world, puzzles are meant to be solved.

My second friend is neither Conservative nor liberal. He is not Democrat nor Republican. He is only extreme in certain circumstances. The thread that ties his opinions together is economics. A secondary thread is achievability. If a course correction is deemed unachievable, then he suggests that we all just accept things as they are, without regard to any Constitutionality. But the major thread, the economics,

runs through everything, even the corrections deemed unachievable. Most of the time the challenge in these situations is the cost to make the correction. In the majority of his opinions, he prioritizes the economics. Therefore, unconstitutional federal programs and agencies, such as the FDA, are acceptable because it would create an economic disjunct among individual state versions of the FDA.

And so, because I am a writer, I will make up a new word for this odd mixture of Progressive Liberalism and soft Conservatism. My second friend is hereby dubbed an "Econocrat." All decisions are based on the economic outcome, especially if that outcome improves his own economic status.

Think about that.