

OUR VIEW: Keep partisan politics out of local elections

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It's tough keeping partisan politics out of any sort of election, but when it comes to many city and county offices, party affiliation doesn't matter a lick.

Take, for example, the county coroner. Finding someone who can adequately investigate the how, when, where and by what means a person has died really has nothing to do with party lines.

The same goes with sheriff. Does being a Republican, Democrat or a member of any other party really make a candidate more or less qualified to work in law enforcement?

On occasion perhaps, but most of the time it doesn't.

Lately it seems many supposedly nonpartisan elections are becoming less and less so.

The Idaho Republican Party in June called for the party to participate in nonpartisan local elections and to identify and support the election of Republican candidates to city councils, school boards and other local government posts.

The Idaho Democratic Party does not officially endorse city council candidates, but does have prominent Democrats come out and endorse particular candidates.

There are people who think voter turnout will increase in local elections if the city council, mayoral and school board races are party affiliated.

We say do your homework instead.

Most local issues have less to do with party ideology and more to do with improving basic municipal services and dealing with community improvements than they do with being right, left, blue, red or upside-down and magenta.

It would be easier for a person who doesn't know the issues or hasn't looked at the candidates to just vote along their party lines, but that's a disservice to yourself and your community.

Find out what issues your city council is dealing with and then research candidates' stances on those issues. What do you think the school board needs to accomplish? What makes a good sheriff?

Find the answer to your questions and then find the person who matches up best with your ideals.

Don't worry about party lines. Worry about your community.

- **Sandra Kelly**, for the editorial board