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## **WHY I HAVE SWITCHED PARTIES AND REGISTERED REPUBLICAN**

Years ago, David Klement, then editor of the Bradenton Herald, asked me to submit an article about why as an 18 year old, I registered to vote as a Democrat. I authored an article that discussed the philosophy of the parties and my reverence for democratic leaders of the past, men like FDR and John and Robert Kennedy. I held the values of the then Democratic Party, a party of the people, as one of FDR's Vice Presidents, Henry Wallace, the consummate Iowan, said a party of the "common man".

When I returned to Bradenton, after law school, I became active in local politics. I joined the Democrat Executive Committee, attended state conferences and served as local party Chairman. I watched as the tide of Republican registration swept through Manatee County. Yet I stood fast.

I was the youngest Democratic Party County Chair in Florida when Bill Clinton and Lawton Chiles were elected. I did not always agree with their policies or decisions. Yet I stood fast.

I supported President Obama while I took significant issue with the way the Affordable Care Act (Obama Care) was passed through congress, and with many portions and provisions of the act. Yet I stood fast. Even when I was disappointed by President Obama's failure to back up his words with deeds in the crisis in Syria and in Crimea, I stood fast. I supported and worked for moderate democratic candidates for the House (Christine Jennings) and the Senate (Charlie Crist), even while I watched the party move further and further to the left. I stood fast.

Then I ran for office (county commission) under the Democrat banner. While I campaigned, I watched the national party attack and demean Supreme Court nominee, Brett Kavanaugh, using allegations from his teenage years, to obstruct his appointment for political reasons. I disagreed with the tactic and silently begged them to stop. Yet I stood fast.

Then I watched the national party spend anywhere between 12 and 40 million of taxpayer money, to go through impeachment proceedings of President Donald Trump. Proceedings that they knew would never result in a conviction. I began to waver.

Now I watch the constant banter on news channels, the press briefings, the struggle for political gain, over people and the economy, centered around one of the greatest struggles this country has ever faced, and I have had enough. There are members of both parties that are well meaning, faithful public servants who have the very best interest of the country in mind. Yet, the

philosophy of government interference into the daily lives and business of the American people on a scale suggested and promoted by the current Democratic party leaders is more than I can bear.

There remain great local Democratic leaders in Manatee County, who have been (and still are) my close friends and whom I have supported over these many years. Some, who will no doubt, be upset by my decision. Like many, I wish there were a viable third party in this country that would provide a place for those of moderate conservative leaning ideology. Unfortunately, that does not yet exist and to register as an “independent” or no “party affiliation” essentially disengages you from political participation.

There are many of those who have switched parties for political gain. Democrats who when they thought they might run for office quickly surveyed the numbers and changed party affiliation. Those who did so with that purpose and with no understanding of the political ideology behind their decisions should be ashamed of themselves. There are those who switched parties as they saw the Democratic Party moving further and further away from their core values and beliefs. There are those who are called “Republicans in Name Only”. Those who believe individual rights and liberties should be sacrificed for the sale of government.

I still ascribe to the Tip O’Neill philosophy that “all politics are local.” Yet I can no longer actively hold myself out as a member of a party who has as a basic philosophy that more government interference and regulation into the lives and businesses of the American public serve the greater good. This is a country that suffers from great political division. The leaders of both parties would do well to shift from the outer edges towards the middle. That said, at this point in my life, I have reached the conclusion that all things considered, I am now a Republican, and my party registration should reflect that reality.