

## **Vote Conservative - that's right...Conservative...by David Russell**

by Stephen Elliott-Buckley - Friday, December 09, 2005

<http://politicsrespun.org/2005/12/vote-conservative-thats-rightconservative/>

Didn't expect to see this coming, did ya?

The time has come, or it will on January 23, 2006, to elect Stephen Harper's Conservatives to lead the government of Canada.

I'll be frank: no one is as surprised as I that these words are being typed out by my fingers. I'm not a member of the Conservative party (though I confess for the first time publicly that I once was, briefly, a member of one of its predecessors, the *Progressive* Conservatives, the former descriptor in the moniker being the more important of the two terms and a prerequisite to my membership).

But mark my words and mark your ballot: the Conservative party needs to be elected in January, preferably as a majority rather than a minority government.

Let's be clear, here: policy wise the Conservatives don't have that much going for them, though there's promise in the [Conservative Party's proposed "Accountability Act"](#) and Paul Martin's protestations notwithstanding, there is merit to decreasing the Goods and Services Tax (which I'll examine in detail in a forthcoming piece).

And certainly, for those who think personality matters, it's hard to argue with Harper's detractors who claim he has less charm and presence than the recorded phone company voice that declares "all circuits are busy now." He's hardly the guy we'd invite over to party-hearty.

That said, Paul Martin isn't exactly Howie Mandel himself.

There are, however, two very important reasons to mark an X next to your local big 'C' candidate.

First, though democracy is probably not best served by choosing a government based on the principle that it's not the previous one, the fact remains the biggest thing the Conservatives have going for them is they're not the Liberals.

Canada's so-called natural governing party has held office for the past twelve years and for a significantly large chunk of Canada's history. And it shows. If ever a party has demonstrated a concerted arrogance in its approach to governance it's the federal Liberals. And no, it isn't necessarily Paul Martin, just like it wasn't really Jean Chretien, though he exemplified the characteristic better than most. The arrogance is structural in the party. It's hard-wired into its organizational DNA. Like a spoiled teenager, the federal Liberal party has developed and long cultivated a culture of expectation. "We deserve to be in power," the culture preaches. "The country should be happy to have us."

And if that means all our friends get great jobs and lucrative contracts so be it. That's a small price to pay

for getting to have the Liberals at the helm.

Secondly, and most importantly, a democracy is not meant to be continuously ruled by a single party, regardless of how often they are legitimately elected (a questionable notion at best) by the public. Democracy needs to breathe, which doesn't necessarily require the incumbent be defeated in every election but too many terms in office allows a party to begin to believe its own press that it is the *de facto* natural ruling party.

The Americans have partially addressed this issue with the 25th amendment to their constitution, which while not prohibiting continuous rule by the same party limits the number of terms a president can serve to two, a rule that's never seemed so golden as it does now.

Canadians don't have those restrictions: as long as we want them we can continue to elect them, certainly a purer form of democracy. All the more reason it's incumbent upon the electorate to make sure governments don't come to take their power for granted; good governance matters and corrupt and arrogant governance ought not to be tolerated.

The simple fact is that even though the we may not agree with everything the Conservatives aim to accomplish, even one term of government not so in line with our own political creeds has the potential to be much more beneficial to the country and to democracy than a government that feels it has the inalienable right to rule.

David Russell