

COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) Pandemic - Good and Bad News

November 11, 2020. Coronavirus infections rates are trending up across the country and around the world, and with each passing day new records are being set for daily instances of the virus in the United States. Earlier this week Pfizer announced that preliminary tests of their vaccine yielded an over 90% efficacy result. The bad news is the virus infection rate is on the rise but there is renewed optimism that a vaccine will be available in the first quarter of 2012.

It has been a week since the national election and the President hasn't conceded defeat; rather the President is threatening to pursue legal action under the unsubstantiated premise of widespread voter fraud. The election also seems to have yielded a divided government - a Democrat in the White House, Republican control of the Senate by a slim margin, and Democrats maintaining a shrinking majority in the House. Curiously this divided government has been greeted by the stock market and many voters as good news. However the specter of the President unwilling to concede and provide a smooth transition of government is bad news.

The current administration should be commended for putting the full weight of government behind a massive effort to find and distribute a vaccine in as quick a timeframe as possible. Unfortunately until the new administration takes office we are apt to have many states continue to promote lack protection practices, such as no mandatory masks policies and keeping bars open. Politicizing the virus has been bad news for the country and possibility one main reason the President didn't get re-elected. But one has to wonder, what would have happened if the Pfizer vaccine announcement came a week or two earlier, would the election results have tipped the other way?

There is a general feeling that we live in a divided country, but that has always been true. Historically about $\frac{1}{3}$ of voters identify as Republican, $\frac{1}{3}$ Democrat, and $\frac{1}{3}$ Independent, with 45% of Independents leaning Republican and 49% Democrat. Additionally a look at the makeup of both the Senate and the House further illustrates this dispersion. The other term that is used to describe the parties is divisive, which can be accurately assigned to both the far left and the far right. Almost all voters have pet issues or concerns. For some it is climate change; for others it might be the economy; or it might be COVID; or it might be abortion; and so on. The point is that only the fringe extremes espoused all of the Republican policies and the same is true with the Democrats. I believe that the bulk of the population is moderate and wants stability, and in the case of COVID the populace wants the truth and is willing to make appropriate concessions for the greater good. Today is Veterans Day, which further reminds us that personal sacrifice is a part of what really makes America great.