

## How does ideology become entrenched in governance?

The United States has a long, effective history of solving problems and making good decisions. We got off to a great start with the ideas of Alexander Hamilton in the earliest days of the Republic. He recognized the dominance of Great Britain's industrial power in the world. So, he facilitated a policy of high tariffs to provide an environment conducive to developing our own industrial base. The rates varied over time, but tariffs were still high until the start of World War II.

Among many other policies, Hamilton also proceeded to establish a sound financial and banking system.

His ideas were so successful that they became the blueprint for countries such as Germany in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and South Korea, Japan, China and others in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Or, consider Dwight Eisenhower who saw the need for an interstate road system.

The 1950s were a time of rapid change and Eisenhower recognized the best way forward was to build on the past, making improvements where needed. He perceived the importance of a united country moving ahead to enhance the foundations of a powerful economy.

In retrospect, his actions in enforcing the rulings of the court system set a strong precedent that was important in the advancements in individual rights that occurred in the 1960s.

**The issue is: what happened to our capacity to identify a need and then proceed to find a solution?**

How does one party defeat legislation that does not conform to the ideology of its leadership? Pragmatic solutions and ideas – the very foundation of our country throughout our history – are discarded while ideology rules. This is done by controlling the committee a bill is assigned to. Leadership always has a committee whose primary responsibility is to make sure that bills in conflict with leadership ideology do not receive a vote by the full Senate (or House).

This is how **IDEOLOGY** becomes the basis for governance. Pragmatic, real solutions are discarded. Pragmatism built our country; but for the past 35 years, we have discredited problem-solving as a basis for governance. This is reality when either party is in control. The results have not been good.

In the current legislative session, one bill opposed by leadership, basically on ideological grounds, is SB17-098. This bill deals with Mobile Home Parks and the residents who own mobile homes located in these Parks. This is an issue of property rights: (1) the historic strong rights of the park owner and (2) the rights of the individual who has purchased a mobile home and located it in the Park.

By the time you read this, SB17-098 will probably be defeated in a committee whose main responsibility is to make sure the bill does not get a vote by the entire State Senate.

By deferring to the property rights of the park owner, the state continues to promulgate a lopsided advantage. It costs approximately \$8,000 to move the mobile home to a new location. Most owners could not come up with enough money to make a move. So residents are intimidated by the possibility of being forced to leave.

There are many very good Mobile Home Park owners, but as is typical, there are those who abuse this lopsided advantage to the detriment of the residents.

Another primary issue is the need for a system that provides reasonable treatment for the residents when the park is sold to a developer who has other plans for the property. Again the cost to move the mobile homes makes relocation impractical. So housing at a reasonable cost, and equity of the residents can be wiped out.

What currently exists is a failed business model that needs to provide more balanced rights and protections.

This is a significant issue since Colorado has over 200,000 mobile homes (almost 5 percent of housing in Colorado). It is a senior issue because many occupants are seniors. (source: Census Bureau for period from 2010 to 2014)

**But perhaps most important: Viable mobile home parks are the only solution to affordable housing that has little or no cost by state and local government.**

It would seem like a “no brainer” that legislation would be passed so that the “lopsided advantage” is changed and the property rights of both owners of the land and the owners of mobile homes would be protected. Passage of SB17-098 would be an important step in providing for the financial security of the mobile home owners and increasing the availability of affordable housing.

If it passes out of committee, Colorado will be the winner; but, if not, leadership can chalk it up as another victory for ideologically based decisions.