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Earl
Dear Tony,

Vince passed your essay on to me and asked me to respond. In general, we're thrilled to have it. It's well-reasoned and to the point and it says something that needs to be said. On the other hand, Ron McCrea is right—it is too abstract, and could use some sprucing up.

For me the piece never really takes off until Page 6, when you explain how the above-mentioned impediments to good government "should not be viewed as a list of abstractions." It is this section, where you explain how these principles came into play during your tenure at governor, that the essay has the most impact. Up until this point there is little sense that the person listing these abstractions has ever held political office.

What I would like to see—and this is a task I would be happy to work with you on—is the inclusion of more material from your political career to give vitality to the arguments. Is there a single experience that most aptly illustrates the clash between good government and good politics? How about telling this story as a lead?

I also think the essay as a whole needs a tad more passion. As governor, what kinds of things were most rewarding? What really ticked you off? Is it true the people who gave you the most problems were liberals who thought they could goad you into getting their way? How do you feel about this?

Finally, I think within this context it would be nice to answer the question, Was it worth it? What accomplishments do you look back on with the most pride? What things do you most regret?

I don't want to throw too many suggestions at you; I'm just trying to stir the old memory pot. The truth is, the hard part is already done. The essay is well-structured, and its logic is compelling. All that needs to be done now is to string some more specifics around the various points.

Happily, we are not in any great hurry for this. One possible plan would be to run it in the early November, right around the anniversary of you know what. That would also make it a more appropriate vehicle for reminiscences, which will strengthen the essay anyhow.

At any rate, we hope this letter finds you well. We look forward to hearing from you.

Best,



Bill Lueders
News Editor