

TRIBLIVE [\(/home/\)](/home/)

[Back \(/opinion/featuredcommentary/10484067-74/parties-party-farce\)](#) | Text Size: **- +**
<http://triblive.com/opinion/featuredcommentary/10484067-74/parties-party-farce>

The sad farce of the political duopoly

ANTONY DAVIES & JAMES R. HARRIGAN | Saturday, May 28, 2016, 9:00 p.m.



Donald Trump

In 2002, Saddam Hussein ran on the Ba'ath party ticket and won Iraq's presidency with 100 percent of the vote. Not surprisingly, Saddam was the only candidate on the ballot. The election was a farce.

Here in the United States, things are obviously better — apparently at least twice as good since we have two candidates running in the general election. But here, too, the game is rigged. Just as the Ba'ath party rigged Iraqi elections by eliminating all competition, so, too, the Republicans and Democrats use their considerable power to keep third parties out of the public eye.

And how do the Republican and Democratic parties, two private organizations, manage to keep everyone not of their number out of view? They use the Commission on Presidential Debates, which they run, and the media, which buys what they are selling.

No one but Republicans and Democrats are welcome in the presidential debates because the two major parties have put a rule in place that requires a candidate to poll at 15 percent nationally in order to be included. The problem you don't know about is that these polls rarely include anyone but the Republican and Democrat candidates. To get into the televised debates, third-party candidates need to poll at 15 percent, in polls in which none of them are included.

This is a farce.

And then, incredibly, the Republican and Democratic parties manage to convince the electorate that voting for a third party candidate is tantamount to wasting one's vote. You simply must vote for one of theirs — this time, Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton. There's your choice, America. Take it or leave it.

This is not an election. It's a farce.

The real shame of it all is that the Republican and Democratic parties have pulled this off with almost no one noticing. One need only ask what the goals of the two parties are to understand.

Is either party dedicated to making Americans' lives better through sensible, constitutional governance?

Is either party dedicated to making the world a safer, more peaceful place?

Is either party dedicated to leaving a better nation to our children than our parents left to us?

None of this even passes the laugh test. No, the Republican and Democratic parties are interested in only one thing — power. And as all organized criminals know, they can achieve that goal better by working together than by competing.

When one party's presumptive candidate is under investigation for multiple felonies and the other's is a buffoon who appears to have entered the race as a fraternity prank, it is clear that there is something deeply wrong with our electoral process. That something is that it isn't an electoral process at all.

It is a farce.

The Republican and Democratic parties are a cartel that shakes down voters every four years. And the voters have become nothing more than dupes in the process — useful idiots who do the bidding of those who lord over them.

It is time for a re-evaluation, starting with the Commission on Presidential Debates. The fox has been guarding the henhouse for far too long. Get the parties out of the business of deciding who the legitimate candidates are.

Anything else is just a farce.

Antony Davies is associate professor of economics at Duquesne University. James R. Harrigan is director of academic programs at Strata in Logan, Utah.

Copyright © 2016 — [Trib Total Media, LLC \(http://tribtotalmedia.com/\)](http://tribtotalmedia.com/) (TribLIVE.com)