

## **“What Comes Next?,” by Dr. Chris Jones**

The election is finally over, and if you're like me, you're running on fumes. Take a moment to rest. Seriously, set a defined time to recover—whether it's a weekend or a week—and give yourself permission to recharge. After that, it's time to get back to work. Our communities need us. Our neighbors need us. The fight to make things better doesn't pause just because ballots have been counted.

As tempting as it might be, avoid the urge to Monday morning quarterback the results of the election before you've had the time to deeply analyze what really happened. Hot takes are rarely helpful, especially when emotions are high, lies are pervasive, and facts are still emerging. Be critical of snap judgments—there's more to learn, and the story is often more layered than it first appears.

I'll have more to say in upcoming articles about the Republican administration's direction, especially the cabinet picks that profoundly misrepresent who we are as Americans. These appointments are shaping up to be the opposite of what so many of us have fought for and believe in, but exactly what the Republicans promised. Matt Gaetz, their nominee for U.S. Attorney General, is so repulsive and corrupt that even Senate Republicans are dismayed. Pete Hegseth, their choice for Secretary of Defense, had tattoos that alarmed the military so much that he was removed from the 2021 Presidential inauguration. And then there is RFK Jr. who we could write three columns about. This guy, RFK Jr., is so out there that he put a dead six-month old baby bear cub into his car, left the baby cub there for hours, then staged the dead cub in New York's Central Park as if it had been hit by a bike. He dropped a dead bear cub in a public park for giggles. You cannot make this stuff up, but you can look it up to verify...and you should.

Closer to home, Arkansas's results might surprise you. Hint: it wasn't all bad news, and there are some bright glimmers of hope that deserve attention. I'll unpack these details in future articles, so stay tuned.

But let me be clear: we're in for a bumpy ride. Get your affairs in order. Prepare for the worst, even as you hope and pray for the best. The Republicans have made no secret of their plans for retribution. They've promised to burn it all down, and I believe they're

ready to go full throttle. What's worse, I see no sign of their members pumping the brakes.

Project 2025 is their playbook, and Arkansas has been its testing ground for the past two years. The results? Alarming declines in health, safety, and mental well-being, coupled with unchecked environmental degradation, opaque governance, and a state leadership that completely ignores its people.

But here's the thing: Democrats in Arkansas have been fighting this fight under the Sanders regime. We've been battling for the forgotten and against abusive control. What we've learned here matters. The country needs to hear our story. Let's get to work.

Share your thoughts and comments at [chrisjoneslistens@gmail.com](mailto:chrisjoneslistens@gmail.com).