

Good Evening,

I would like to welcome our honored guests. All of us at the American Embassy thank you for joining us for this election evening celebration.

This evening marks the 56th presidential election in the history of our country; it is a very exciting time for all Americans, and certainly an interesting time for the rest of the world.

I have attended a number of election evening parties, sometimes in the company of the winning candidate, and sometimes in the company of the losing party. They have always been interesting, and sometimes exciting. This presidential election has been the longest running campaign I can remember, and certainly one of the hardest fought.

Regardless of the outcome, the result will be a “first” for our country: we will have either the first U.S. President of African American heritage, or the first female American Vice President. I am only sorry that we will not really know the election outcome this evening, as the polls will close in our Westernmost state, Hawaii in 16 hours.

Nonetheless, I am very pleased that you are all here to share in the excitement of our election evening celebration.

I know that many of you may have some questions about our process, which is a little more complicated than a simple vote for the preferred candidate. Our lengthy primary process, the national conventions for the Democratic, Republican and alternative parties and the Electoral College are sometimes confusing even for Americans, and can certainly seem mysterious to our global neighbors. I hope this evening gives you an opportunity to learn and understand a little more about our election process.

Functionally similar to the Parliamentary system, our lengthy election process is designed to narrow the field of candidates. The Electoral College system arose from the philosophical beliefs of our Founding Fathers, as well as certain practical considerations.

The vast geographical area of our country, and the simple and slow communications system obliged us to apply a representational form of election in order to insure timely installation of a constitutionally empowered executive branch. Despite the changes that have taken place over time, I think the system continues to serve us well, giving even the smallest state a representational voice in the election. By Inauguration Day, on January 20 we will be ready to go forward, putting the politics of the election process behind us.

This brings me to what I believe is the true message of our election process, and the real legacy of the 4<sup>th</sup> of July – that legacy is Inauguration Day. For me in particular, coming originally from a region of political uncertainty and upheaval, Inauguration Day is quite remarkable. On that day, the outgoing President gets on an airplane, turns, smiles and waves goodbye and peacefully goes home.

Never once in our history has that transition not happened, never once has the military had to enforce the election, never once has the outgoing person refused to leave, and never once have the people who voted for the losing party been disenfranchised or attacked. If our political process, with all its strengths and weaknesses, its serious moments and its more lighthearted aspects can offer an example to our global neighbors, it is the truth of Inauguration Day, when the will of the majority is exercised, ever protecting the rights of the minority.

Thank you for your presence here. We would also like to thank the friends of the Embassy who have provided support to this evening's celebration – the companies listed on the back of your programs and the management and staff here at the Union Hotel. We are pleased to have you as our guests, we hope you vote, take the opportunity to become acquainted with our process and enjoy the company of all our friends and neighbors.

Najlepša hvala in vsem želim lep večer !