Letter to the editor:

I attended the 2019 Reagan Day Dinner put on by the Hickman County Republican Party (July 19). Dusty Jordan, the county chair, welcomed me with a smile and a firm grip along with about 100 others. It was a fine event catered by Linita’s in Pinewood, up on Hwy 48, not far from my place.

I talked to some nice folks. One couple had moved to Hickman County from Vermont a few years ago after studying Kentucky and Virginia. They had a four bedroom place up there on five acres, but now they have 400 acres and a nice house in beautiful Hickman County, Tennessee where they pay a only a third of what they did for taxes in Vermont. They are quite happy about that.

I went to the dinner because I wanted to hear from my elected representatives.

Representative Michael Curcio spoke earnestly about serving as a new member of the legislature. He chairs the Judiciary Committee, a plumb appointment for a freshman, and he spoke about the work he is doing to secure a new judical district that fits the rural character of Hickman County.

Senator Kerry Roberts spoke forcefully about how some people had misinterpreted the actions of the Senate on the “heartbeat bill.” Late in the last session the Senate referred the abortion bill to a summertime study committee. Some irate constituents thought that maneuver was designed to kill the bill because that is what often happens in such cases. NO, he insisted, the real reason it was sent to a study committee is so the language of the bill could be crafted in a way that will allow the Supreme Court to overturn Roe v. Wade, the constitutional right of a woman to have an abortion, when the new law is challenged in court, as it surely will be, he told us.

Congressman Dr. Mark Green spoke last. He began by saying Washington is a total mess, to which everyone nodded. But then he offered no suggestion of how problems could be solved by reaching across the aisle to work with Democrats. No hint of political compromise graced his lips. I was stunned by what he did say. He was passionate, articulate, and wholly demagogic. He looked like a dark version of Donald Trump, incuding the smirk, the gestures, and the distortions. He took the statements of Democratic outliers to misrepresent the views of the whole opposition party. He spoke of a culture war over the soul of America, where our very existence as a country is at stake. He told us good Christian people vote Republican. Only Trump can save us. The diners clapped approvingly.

In politics these rhetorical tactics are old but still used because they work so well. Demagogues tell people to be afraid, that disaster is coming. Then, they tell them whom to blame, whom to hate. Demagogues don’t tell folks how to work together to solve problems but instead how to tear “the other” apart. Demagogues destroy community.

I was very disappointed. In Hickman County good folks don’t talk that way, or clap approvingly to demagogy..

Rick Pride

Pinewood