

# With a Little Help from my Friends



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*[Sang to Joe Cocker's classic... or for our younger readers and American Idol fans, think of the Casey Abrams remake]*

“What would you do if I voted against you? Would you stand up and walk out on me? Lend me your ears and I'll tell you 'bout me... and I'll try not to sound too partisan...”

OK, maybe that last line doesn't rhyme, but it helps prove my point. But before I get to my point I want to tell you about my month of July to help drive it home.

First, my family and I were at a Fourth of July neighborhood celebration, complete with a kid's parade and the Pledge of Allegiance (shockingly with the words “Under God” included) followed up by a party at a friend's house. It was a real Norman Rockwell moment that got me thinking about the importance of having good friends in my life who would do anything for me or my family.

Later in the month is the “Daddy of 'em All” – Cheyenne Frontier Days – where more than 2,000 volunteers make this rodeo the best in the country. Think about that: more than 2,000 volunteers working together on everything – from security and parking to animal/cowboy safety and public relations – to make this an event that people from all over the world travel to see.

I'm lucky enough to be one of those 2,000. While I don't know all of them on a personal level, the people with whom I work are some of the hardest-working, nicest and most honest people I've ever met, and I'm proud to count them as my friends.

Now bear with me, because I'm not just painting a nice picture of Americana for

you, but I'm giving you these examples to make a political point. If our elected officials in Washington could form the type of friendships and relationships that I have, and that I know many people across the country have (regardless of political party), I don't think the problems our country faces would seem so monumental.

Forgive me for paraphrasing a self-proclaimed non-believer in the cooperative principles, but I have heard former U.S. Senator Alan Simpson talk about the lack of civility and friendship in Washington. His main premise was that it is harder to stab a colleague in the back if you're friends with them. Remember, this is coming from a Wyoming Republican Cowboy who was great friends with the New England Democrat Teddy Kennedy, a friendship that was pure and true.

However, and I've said this before, we can't put all the blame on our elected officials. As constituents, we expect them to be everywhere all the time, and they are asked to raise obscene amounts of money regardless of whether or not they're up for re-election. So given those circumstances, who has time to make friends?

Nonetheless, I think it would behoove all 435 members of the U.S. House of Representatives to join the 100 members of the Senate and get together. Not to sing Kum-ba-yah, because that would be cheesy, but maybe to join Joe Cocker and Casey Abrams to sing out of tune and try to not to walk out on each other.