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Letters

The Time Is Now

After last fall's mid-term elections, I'd had my fill of the political machine. The endless radio and television ads that portrayed every individual as the worst possible choice desensitized me to the real issues that the candidates were supporting. By the time Election Day arrived, I barely had the energy to go to the polls. Despite the negative jingles ringing in my head, I picked the candidates I felt would best lead our state and country for the next few years. I am happy to report I did not vote all red nor all blue. Instead, I chose candidates based on issues I felt were important for my family, my profession, and my community. Too often today, we are led to believe that we must subscribe to one party's ideals to create "real change" in politics. Realistically, one party will never be able to drive policy change on a permanent level. Time has shown that the pendulum will swing back, and there will be a shift of power.

Compromise has become a four-letter word in politics. We are now in the political atmosphere of

"mandates" based on election results without a hint of working together toward a common goal. The house of medicine must not view issues through either red or blue lenses. Our issues transcend any political party or any particular politician. Our "issues" are our patients. We must collectively put patients first in our advocacy efforts if we want to gain the respect of our leaders in Congress.

We have a unique opportunity this April at Congressional Advocacy Day in Washington, D.C. There will be many new legislators in Congress after the fall elections—new leaders who need to hear from their constituents. These leaders need advice when considering new legislation.

Join your fellow ophthalmologists, and be an advocate for your patients and your profession. Go to www.aao.org/myf to sign up for Congressional Advocacy Day (April 15-16) and the Mid-Year Forum (April 15-18).

The time for change is now.

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WRITE TO US Send your letters of 150 words or fewer to us at *EyeNet Magazine*, AAO, 655 Beach Street, San Francisco, CA 94109; e-mail eyenet@aoa.org; or fax 415-561-8575. (*EyeNet Magazine* reserves the right to edit letters.)