

Candidates who despise the office

By [Richard A. Kauffman](#)

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If my pastor got up some Sunday and said, "I am not a pastor. I'm just a regular person," I'd respond like this: "Well, we hired you to be a pastor, and if you have a problem with it you should find another line of work."

Congresswoman Michele Bachmann said something similar after finding out she [came in dead last in Iowa yesterday](#): "I am a very real person, I am not a politician. Nor do I ever hope or aspire to be a politician."

But Bachmann is a politician, quite apart from whether she's suited for the office of congressperson, much less the presidency. She's served three terms in Congress, and until she [dropped out of the race today](#) she aspired to be the president of the United States. Why denigrate the very role you play? This only adds to people's cynicism about the political process and about politicians themselves.

And how can Bachmann, who holds the Constitution in high regard, tear down the very offices prescribed by it?

In a [recent op-ed](#) in the *Seattle Times*, William Ruckelshaus, former administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, has some wise words for politicians about what it will take to restore the peoples' trust in government:

Tell us
why we should vote for *you*,
not what's wrong with your opponent. Show us you understand our nation's problems and tell us what you are going to do about them. Promise you will work with whomever your colleagues turn out to be Tell us you believe

compromise is not a bad word Get things done.

And here is
the kicker:

Stop tearing down the institution (Congress) to which you want us to elect you. We don't want to hear our congressman say, 'You think Congress is bad; you don't know the half of it ...' Stop boosting yourself by mocking the institution of which you want to be a part.

As Ruckelshaus acknowledges,
such a shift in political rhetoric wouldn't resolve all our national problems. But it's a good place to begin. We need politicians who believe it is a high calling to serve the people--and who are transparent about their vision and plans for the future of our nation.