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Voters demand smaller government

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Diana Sroka Rickert

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The election was a week ago, and the half of the voters who didn't vote for Donald Trump are still dumbfounded by the half who did.

A Los Angeles Times story profiled Trump supporters so they could go public and "explain" their vote. A front-page story in Sunday's Chicago Tribune offered "clues" to Trump's win, as though his victory is as much a mystery as what happened to Jimmy Hoffa.

Some are taking his win particularly hard. The immigration website for Canada reportedly shut down last week due to an influx of traffic, presumably from people attempting to escape a Trump presidency.

DePaul University in Chicago offered counseling for students to discuss the "contentious and polarizing election cycle," a school spokesperson said. At Cornell University, students held a "cry-in" the day after the election. A video from the university newspaper shows Ivy Leaguers sitting cross-legged on the sidewalk, weeping and coloring with chalk as they sip coffee.

Professors reportedly canceled exams and classes at colleges across the country, and workplace election "hangovers" inhibited employee productivity in the working world. Oh, and some people started wearing safety pins to . . . OK. Enough.

Has the U.S. become a nation of wimps and sore losers? Your call.

But melodrama aside, if you are distraught about Trump's ascent to the White House, then maybe we can agree: It was never meant to be this way. As in, the federal government was never meant to be so powerful, so expansive and so prevalent that it would have such a significant economic, physical or emotional impact on our lives.

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The government decides what kinds of light bulbs I can buy and which doctors I can see. It's nearly impossible to go to college these days without getting a student loan from the feds (which is ironic, given that federal intervention is what has driven up the cost of higher education in the first place).

I recently flew with my toddler. Bringing a juice box on the airplane meant I had to get patted down by the Transportation Security Administration.

Why? When we're tossing open water bottles and medium-sized shampoos at the security check, we seldom remember the TSA didn't even exist 15 years ago or what any of this has to do with stopping terrorism. I shudder to think that TSA now is a $7 billion operation that, despite having few achievements, probably will never go away.

It's no secret Americans are jaded by Washington. Poll after poll shows we think the federal government is incapable, corrupt and wasteful. Campaigns essentially are a contest of who can make the best promises to target constituent groups and then turn out the vote among that audience.

Bernie Sanders offered free college. So Hillary Clinton followed suit. The Democrats offered child care to working moms. So then there was Trump, doing his own variation of the child-care dance.

Supporters of President Barack Obama embraced expanding the government's role, particularly the executive branch. Of course, they liked who was living in the White House. Meanwhile, proponents of limited government were called racist, crazy or kooks.

Perhaps now everyone can understand that allowing one individual to exert unchecked power is wrong, no matter who's in the White House. Our nation was founded on the principle of limited government for good reason.

"The framers of the Constitution knew that a person of George Washington's caliber would not always be chosen president," Trevor Burrus of the Cato Institute wrote recently. "Here's a basic principle of good government: Don't endorse a government power you wouldn't want wielded by your worst political enemy."

The framers of the Constitution did not envision a federal government that imposes one politician's preferences on an entire nation. The federal government was meant to hum quietly in the background and allow us to go about living the lives we choose without too much intervention.

The founders envisioned a country in which citizens could vote with their feet to live in a state that best matches their values. You want a $15 minimum wage? Live in Seattle. You aren't bothered by paying higher soda/sales/property/gas/alcohol/tobacco/amusement/parking/etc. taxes? Go to Chicago.

So instead of tweeting #notmypresident or scheming for someone else to take over the presidency in four or eight years, consider a solution with more staying power.

Rally for a smaller, more accountable federal government. Under a true system of federalism, Trump supporters in Alabama and Clinton supporters in Vermont need not interfere too deeply in each others' lives.