

Red or Blue? This Book is 4 U!

Bob Jackson

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Bob Jackson met up with his family for Sunday brunch. Over the course of the meal, the discussion—as it does in many families—turned to current events and frustration with a government that seems to be perpetually mired in either conservative or liberal politics. During these debates, Jackson got an idea—one which he outlines in his latest book, *Red or Blue? This Book is 4 U!*

Jackson states that the polarity between “red thinking” and “blue thinking” people has tied up the government. Because of this, Jackson makes a bold suggestion that we should “separate the United States into two independent and sovereign countries.” The book’s remaining chapters outline how these countries would be divided by a proposed amendment.

Jackson’s argument is bold and surprising. It is clear that he has put considerable thought into how important concerns like Social Security, treaties, and the military should be handled. Of course, there are hiccups. West Coast blue states are separated from midwestern and northeastern blue states by a huge swath of red states. And despite the detail provided on other issues, Jackson brushes over how the government’s financial problems would be divided. He offers only a few ideas in bullet points and the comment, “The plan needs to be drafted and executed independently by each of the two new countries.”

Another misstep in Jackson’s plan is found in his map that breaks up the states. He fails to list his source for how states are divided, and the result is that his borders seem arbitrary. While Jackson acknowledges that some states might not be fully red or blue, history has shown that individuals will vote on issues they feel strongly about even if their opinion does not follow typical red- or blue-thinking dogma. This is why most strategists look at maps that show election results by county, not just by state, and how the phrase “seeing purple” entered the vernacular.

More importantly, Jackson does not explain how a split will solve the real problem—polarity. Drawing a literal line on a map that divides red and blue is more likely to escalate rather than ease tensions. Throughout the book, the author stresses that his plan is not about secession which is a forceful means of dividing a nation.

Whether one agrees or disagrees with Jackson’s argument, *Red or Blue? This Book is 4 U!* is a book that is sure to provoke discussion on what it means to be American.

KATERIE PRIOR (October 25, 2011)

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