NO; I WON'T SIGN YOUR PETITION

Posted on April 22, 2015 by Eddie

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Category: Observations

Everyday, someone on Twitter or Facebook will suggest that I sign a petition for or against some worthy cause. Sometimes I agree with them and sometimes I don't; but whatever my thoughts, I'm unlikely ever to sign an online petition on any subject. Let me tell you why.

A few years ago, I was named in an online petition about something I was tangentially involved in. The issue itself isn't relevant at this point.

The first thing I knew about it was that my inbox was flooded with identical emails from people that I didn't know. I glanced at one or two of them and then swiftly set up a filter to move any further emails of that sort to my spam folder. The email deluge went on for a few weeks, with an accompanying Twitter and Facebook campaign. Through what was a rather fraught time, I learned a few lessons.

- Most people who signed the petition didn't really have a clue about the issues they had expressed an opinion on. They simply followed the line of the people whipping up a storm without really examining the case one way or the other.
- People were quick to judge and slow to think. A number of people that I know personally signed the petition or attacked me on social media without ever speaking to me in the first place.
- I took a lot of care and interest in those who approached me directly to raise their concerns. I tried to answer every personal email I received on the subject and engaged in a number of long respectful correspondences with people.Â Sometimes we agreed, often we didn't. In truth, the time was so difficult, that I may have dropped the ball on some of the discussions, but I honestly tried to engage with everyone who contacted me personally.

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If you send me a link to a petition, I will almost certainly ignore you. However, if you can convince me that you have a case and that I couldÂ achieve something by intervening, I might write and email.

This means that you will have to work harder to convince me to get involved and I'll have to work harder to play my part. The problem is, that this defeats the whole purpose of the internet!

I think I'll go and look at some photos of kittens.