★ ★ ★ ★ ★

MAGA
AFTER
2020

How the GOP Can Win Again

—— *and* ——

Save America

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

AMERICAN
PRINCIPLES PROJECT

AUTHORS

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Terry Schilling

Terry Schilling is the President of American Principles Project and has extensive campaign management experience.

Frank Cannon

Frank Cannon is the Founding President of the American Principles Project and a political consultant to Susan B. Anthony List.

Jon Schweppe

Jon Schweppe is Director of Policy and Government Affairs for American Principles Project.

Contents

INTRODUCTION

**There is only one benefit in political defeat:
the opportunity to evaluate what you are doing wrong.**

SINCE THE CONCLUSION of the 2020 election a few months ago, much ink has already been spilled over what mistakes Republicans made which led to President Donald Trump losing the White House and the GOP losing control of the U.S. Senate. And similar to past electoral defeats, the diagnoses of what went wrong and the prescriptions of how to fix them have varied widely. Indeed, these internal disagreements have already been described by many in the media and pundit class as constituting a Republican "civil war."

Whether or not this description is accurate is debatable. However, among the various Republican reactions to the election, there does appear to be a central dividing line – one which goes deeper than disputes over political tactics or the relative vices and virtues of Trump. The central controversy in the post-2020 GOP boils down to the answer to one question: Does the contemporary Left represent an existential threat to the American experiment?

Although this question has not often been posed in explicit terms, it looms as an unacknowledged premise in virtually every response to the 2020 election. Take, for example, a March 2021 memo from the Republican-aligned Congressional Leadership Fund super PAC.[1] The document attributes the GOP's strong showing in House races to the party's recruitment of candidates who were "a woman, a minority, or a veteran." And it identifies as "early keys" to winning in 2022: continuing this "recruitment success," "fixing the GOP's massive candidate-side fundraising problem," hammering Democrats for their "socialist overreach," and "maximizing our battlefield."

None of these are necessarily bad goals. However, the near exclusive focus on surface-level improvements such as recruiting more diverse candidates and increasing fundraising suggest a presumption that American politics in 2022 and beyond will continue to be a business-as-usual affair. A tweak in election strategy here and a

shift in campaign tactics there is all that will be required to beat back the Democrats.

Of course, the CLF isn't alone in arguing for a return to Republican normalcy. The most obvious and vocal are those like Reps. Liz Cheney and Adam Kinzinger who have repeatedly called for Trump to be exiled from the party and for the GOP to return to a pre-Trump consensus. "[W]e are the party of Abraham Lincoln, we are the party of Ronald Reagan," Cheney opined during a February interview.[2] "We have to be in a position where we can say we stand for principles, we stand for ideals…" While those "principles" and "ideals" were left undefined, one presumes they are those which predominated before 2016.

By contrast, a March 2021 memo from Republican Study Committee Chairman Jim Banks suggests a much different direction for the GOP, one which acknowledges the fundamental changes that have taken place since Trump's election.[3] And while it primarily focuses on the need for the party to embrace working-class voters, Banks' memo also implicitly recognizes the new and dangerous threats posed by the Left. Notably, it advises that Republicans ought to directly challenge the Democrats on their "wokeness and identity politics," move to regulate Big Tech in order to counter their threats to free speech, and shift focus to individual donations to help the party further divorce itself from the negative influence and image of leftist-captured big business.

Based on these recommendations, it seems clear that Rep. Banks, like many conservatives, understands that a return to the pre-Trump status quo for Republicans is impossible, never mind undesirable. Ever since Donald Trump became the GOP standard-bearer, elite institutions—which had long been biased towards the Left—have shifted into an overt, oppositional stance, aggressively

working to undermine Republicans and conservatives at every opportunity. The examples of this are too numerous to list exhaustively, but a few in particular stand out:

★ The administrative state and intelligence community illegally spied on the Trump campaign and transition team, concocted a fictitious "Russian collusion" narrative that ultimately led to Trump's first impeachment, and blocked the implementation of Trump's agenda at every level through his entire term.

★ The media and major tech companies asserted their newfound power to control

the flow of information online. As the 2020 election approached, power over political advertisements was granted to biased "fact-checkers" who could then decide whether or not they were to be removed from online platforms. Discussion of major Biden scandals was banned online, and simply left uncovered on major media outlets. Statements from the President were removed or given warning labels. And certain conservative opinions were gradually ruled out-of-bounds and censored.

★ In response to the death of George Floyd in May 2020, left-wing activists instigated months of rioting nationwide, egged on and supported by Democrats. Meanwhile, the education establishment and corporate America used the event to accelerate the implementation of Critical Race Theory in classrooms and HR policies, dividing Americans by skin color and fostering increasing racial resentment.

★ Democratic governors, backed by a leftist-dominated healthcare establishment, used the COVID-19 pandemic to enforce long-term, punitive lockdown measures which destroyed the economy, mitigating one of Trump's best re-election arguments—all while the media continued to blame death counts on Trump. Democrats and allied progressive groups also used COVID as an excuse to loosen voting rules in key swing states to their benefit, opening the door for fraud.

The convergence of all these actions, and many others like them, suggest that the political and cultural reality in America has fundamentally changed from where it was pre-Trump. We

no longer live in a country where both Left and Right are committed to competing by the same rules and separated by mere policy differences. Rather, over the last four years, the Left has displayed an increasing willingness to cast aside even the most basic American ideals—freedom of speech, the rule of law, equality of opportunity—in order to seize and maintain power. Indeed, many on the Left now openly reject these ideals, and cast the very founding of America as an evil act that must be atoned for. Today, it is clearer than ever that what conservatives are now faced with is a growing challenge to the very heart of the American experiment itself.

Behind this challenge is the adoption by the Left of a new ideology profoundly different from the liberalism and even progressivism of generations past. This ideology—which we will identify as wokeism—sees all aspects of society through the lens of conflict between identity groups, some of which are categorized as privileged (white, male, traditional sexuality, etc.) and others as marginalized (minority, female, LGBTQ, etc.). Driven by wokeism, the Left's primary mission has become the disempowering of the "privileged" and empowering of the "marginalized" through the imposition of radical measures which would destroy America's most fundamental institutions. And they increasingly seek to implement these measures via totalitarian means, mustering their immense institutional power to silence and punish their opposition.

The relatively passive and deferential Republican politics of previous eras are simply incapable of meeting this challenge. Donald Trump intuitively recognized this and was perhaps the first major political figure to significantly confront wokeism, which is precisely why he won in 2016 and still came within 43,000 votes of winning in 2020 despite the unprecedented

> **The relatively passive and deferential Republican politics of previous eras are simply incapable of meeting this challenge.**

hostility he faced.[4] This, if nothing else, should be a sign that the GOP's future must involve embracing and building on the Make America Great Again movement begun by Trump, not rejecting or pivoting away from it.

In particular, there are four concrete elements of the MAGA agenda that must become central to the GOP if Republicans hope to effectively combat wokeism and recapture political power, as well as defend what remains of America's foundations from total destruction:

★ **Securing our elections:** Republicans cannot allow the new election regime of mass mail-in voting, vote harvesting, and the like to continue. No developed country operates their elections in this fashion, and for good reason—it leaves voting open to massive amounts of fraud, while at the same time damaging trust in the basic democratic process. The 2020 election was not secure in too many places, and biased voting practices were almost certainly decisive in close swing-states.

★ **Rebuilding the American family:**
Republicans must commit to an agenda centered around rebuilding the American family. This is not just a practically necessary response to the current crisis of dramatically falling marriage and birth rates but also a politically necessary move in recognition of an electoral reality: the GOP cannot win without family-oriented voters. Moreover, since families are the most important and powerful mediating institution in society, strengthening the American family necessarily decreases the influence of other institutions the Left is currently reliant on to bolster its own power.

★ **Fighting woke-captured institutions:**
Many Republicans continue to give unmerited deference to major institutions of American society—the legacy media, Big Tech, corporate America, academia, the federal law and defense establishment (CIA/FBI/DoD/DoJ) and so on. However, this deference is no longer deserved, given that these institutions have largely been captured and weaponized by the woke Left against conservatives. Republicans must recognize this and instead work to fight against the influence of these corrupted institutions wherever necessary.

★ **Affirming America's fundamental goodness:** At the heart of the MAGA message was an appeal to the essential goodness of America. This would not have been controversial even in the recent past, but today, woke leftists who believe America is fundamentally evil hold a vast amount of influence in American society and are working to enforce their vision in every area they control. Republicans must firmly reject the woke project to divide and conquer America through identity politics and instead advance a vision of America as fundamentally good, appealing to the values that all Americans share in common.

Photo ©Phil Roeder via Flickr.

HOW WE GOT HERE

While the present-day quandary facing Republicans and conservatives has become readily apparent in recent months, its origins go back at least a decade.

IN LATE 2012, on the heels of a humiliating defeat to an incumbent during one of the worst economic periods in recent memory, the GOP found itself in a similar position to where it is now: searching for answers as to why the party had lost and what it needed to change moving forward.

The most publicized response came from the Republican National Committee, which commissioned an "autopsy" report to try to understand what had gone wrong.[5] The report, assembled by a group of party elites, blamed the loss on poor campaign organization and technology, as well as on the GOP's social conservative platform. The Romney-Ryan economic message, they argued, was a winning one, though it was not necessarily heard by the voters. Instead, it was overshadowed by Republicans' too strong adherence to culture war priorities and traditional positions on social issues like same-sex marriage and abortion. To win young voters, minority voters, and women, the GOP would need to call a Mitch-Daniels-style "truce" on social issues,[6] and "embrace and champion comprehensive immigration reform." If they failed to do so, the report predicted doom for the party, driven by demographic destiny. In addition, the GOP would also need to double down on the Romney-Ryan economic message, embracing its image as the party of "job creators" and innovative big-tech disruptors like Uber, Amazon, and Facebook.[7]

Our organization, the American Principles Project, strongly disagreed, and published a counter-autopsy in response.[8] Based on the available evidence, the American people had not opted for the Democrat status quo in a dismal

economy despite preferring Romney's economic message. Rather, the Romney campaign's messaging around the plight of job creators had convinced workers that he intended primarily to help their bosses rather than themselves. Nor had voters considered Romney, who had spent the campaign disavowing and de-emphasizing social issues, as too socially conservative. Instead, Romney's silence on cultural issues had made social conservatives wary while allowing his opponents to define him negatively.

> **[T]he obvious path forward was to reject the 'truce' model on social issues and instead attack the Democrats on their massively unpopular social-issues extremism.**

In reality, the obvious path forward was to reject the "truce" model on social issues and instead attack the Democrats on their massively unpopular social-issues extremism. Furthermore, the Republican Party needed to craft a populist economic message that could speak to the needs and concerns of working-class Americans rather than just their bosses. This, we argued, would lead to the growth of the party, particularly among working-class voters.

If anything vindicated our assessment of the political landscape and our prescription for Republican politics, it was the success of Donald Trump. In 2016, Trump convincingly defeated a deep field of GOP primary opponents, many of whom campaigned under various versions of the 2012 RNC autopsy strategy, and he followed it up by beating a heavily favored Democrat in the general election. He did so while embracing certain culture war issues, such as abortion, and offering an economically populist alternative to the Romney-Ryan message. He even proved our recommendations to be slightly too conventional: while our report agreed with the RNC that Republicans needed to jettison their "harsh rhetoric" and "unsympathetic policies" on immigration to win over Hispanics, Trump correctly intuited that prominently campaigning on stronger borders and against illegal immigration would be a net positive. The success of Trump moved the Republican Party dramatically in the right direction, a fact which even the RNC seems to recognize, as the 2012 autopsy can no longer be found on their website.
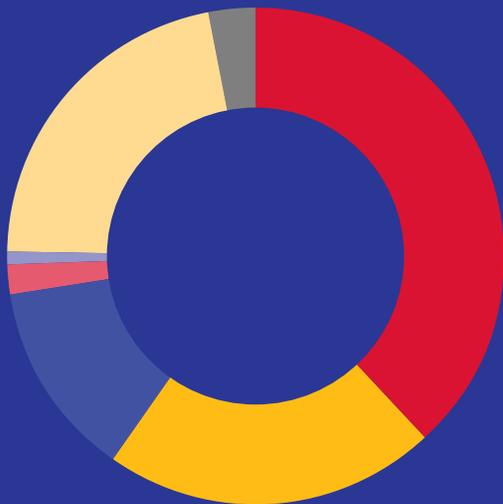
What has also become clearer in retrospect, however, is that the fight over the direction of the GOP after 2012, while ostensibly a disagreement over policy, was in fact representative of a much deeper divide. Although "woke" had not yet made its way into common parlance, the ideology of wokeism was already entrenched in elite circles, including in the establishment of the Republican Party. Its influences on the RNC's 2012 autopsy are easy to spot: talk of the need for "diversity" and "inclusion" abound, undergirded by the assumption that the GOP coalition could only be grown by abandoning cultural conservatism.

But these beliefs were obviously not shared by most Republican voters, who were becoming

2016 Trump Voter Motivation

What do you think is the main reason so many people are supporting Donald Trump?

(Among likely Trump primary voters)

- He is not politically correct
- Business success
- Immigration policy
- Trade policy
- Tax policy
- Something else
- Not sure

Source: *The Economist/*YouGov Poll, March 10-12, 2016

increasingly disillusioned with the party's leadership. According to exit polling from the 2016 presidential primaries, the majority of GOP voters in nearly every state said they felt betrayed by Republican politicians and preferred that the next president come from outside the establishment.[9] Moreover, they were overwhelmingly fed up with leaders in Washington as a whole: close to 9 in 10 Republican voters in every state said they were either dissatisfied or angry with the federal government.

Trump, to his credit, seemed to recognize this growing disconnect from the beginning. After the RNC report's release, Trump tweeted his agreement with Rush Limbaugh that, far from the RNC's assessment, Romney had lost because he wasn't conservative or tough enough. "@RNC report was written by the ruling class of consultants who blew the election," he wrote. "Short on ideas. Just giving excuses to the donors."[10]

In response, Trump ran on what could be described as the polar opposite of the RNC

Photos ©Anthony Crider via Flickr.

autopsy's prescription, to immediate success. Trump announced his candidacy on June 16, 2015, and by mid-July he had taken the lead in the RealClearPolitics polling average of the GOP primary field, a lead which he held, almost without exception, for the remainder of the primary campaign.[11] Ultimately, he would win 41 of 56 primary contests on his way to decisively capturing the Republican nomination.

While Trump's coalition was a broad one, his support was strongest, unsurprisingly, among the anti-establishment majority. In the exit polling, Trump consistently overperformed with those who felt betrayed by Republicans and were angry about the federal government. And although many have argued that economic displacement was the major motivating factor for these voters, there is evidence to suggest otherwise. In a March 2016 poll, a plurality (39%) of likely Trump primary voters cited his lack of political correctness as their reason for supporting him, far more than those who cited his immigration or trade policies.[12] Of course, Trump's economic populism did play an important role in his success, but it was his rejection of the

leadership class' woke pieties, and willingness to fight back when attacked on it, that constituted perhaps the most significant part of his appeal.

And despite numerous predictions of doom, that appeal eventually carried over to the general electorate. Mirroring trends in the primaries, Trump's support in the general election polarized most powerfully along the lines of class, status, wealth, and elite credentialism.[13] Wealthy and highly educated voters, who had been turning Democrat for years, became much more so in 2016. Working-class voters without a college degree, meanwhile, became much more Republican. This led to a number of strange dynamics in the campaign, and wrongheaded explanations of Trump's victory afterwards. Pundits analyzing the race on TV, in print, in academia, and within the political establishment were exactly the type of people to whom Trump did not appeal, and they projected their own feelings and biases onto their electoral theories.

For example, in a preview of woke attacks to come, some explained Trump's victory via theories of racial resentment or backlash among whites amid a demographically changing

country and after two terms of America's first black president. These theories not only entirely misunderstood the real economic and nationalist reasons for Trump's success on immigration, but also overlooked the fact that Trump succeeded by winning over a significant portion of voters who had just voted for Obama twice, who could only be categorized as white supremacists under the most convoluted academic theories of racism. This white-backlash hypothesis also failed to explain the increased racial diversity of the Trump coalition as compared to Mitt Romney's.[14] Trump had done the exact opposite of what the RNC had proposed on policy in 2013 and yet had come closer than Romney to achieving the RNC autopsy's goal of a more racially diverse party.

In reality, Trump won by converting working-class Obama voters, attracting "unlikely" voters, and by positioning himself where most voters were: economically populist, socially conservative, and against the woke elite.[15] While elites considered Trump to be an extremist, voters ranked him as moderate in the primaries, and as one of the most moderate presidential candidates since at least Ronald Reagan.[16] This move away from wealthier elite voters and towards working-class voters was electorally extremely advantageous, as will be discussed later. But it came with a significant downside, as the rest of America's political and cultural institutions had become dominated by the kind of voter who hated Trump with a passion. The de facto aristocracy of America had been captured by the new ideology of wokeism.

As mentioned previously, wokeism is premised on the idea that the world is fundamentally divided between privileged and marginalized identity groups, and primarily around racial or sexual identities. It holds that the world can only be healed by an intense focus on the perceived power imbalance between these identity groups, and by in every instance seeking to disempower those with "oppressive" characteristics (white, male, traditional sexuality, etc.) with the goal of preferential treatment for those with "oppressed" characteristics (minority, female, LGBTQ, etc.).

This requires the full abandonment of any claim to relativism or tolerance. The woke Left does not seek to allow the free expression of opinions contrary to the new ideology. It deems such arguments to be equivalent to physical violence, or possibly worse, and to justify the type of response normally reserved for terrorists or violent criminals.[17] It does not aspire to an impartial rule of law; it expects the law and its

> **In reality, Trump won by converting working-class Obama voters, attracking "unlikely" voters, and by positioning himself where most voters were: economically populist, socially conservative, and against the woke elite.**

enforcement to be directed towards redressing this system of privileged and marginalized. For example, if a demonstration is violent, but is purported to be on behalf of one of the "oppressed" groups, it ought to be allowed. Other actions are similarly analyzed in terms of various characteristics (combined into "identity") of the perpetrator and victim. All normal rules of civic life can be violated in order to harm the putative interests of perceived "oppressors," or to elevate those of the "oppressed."[18]

Almost every action undertaken by Trump during his presidency was framed by the Left and their institutions as an attack on oppressed identity groups. Attempts to secure the border were cast as racist attacks on Muslims and Hispanics. Attempts to defend religious liberty or to affirm the reality of sex in law were cast as attacks on LGBTQ-identifying persons. The nomination of Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court was cast as an attack on women. Attempts to hold China accountable for their trade practices

or for the COVID-19 pandemic were cast as anti-Asian bigotry. Expressions of patriotism were cast as attacks on nearly every oppressed group, who in the woke narrative had been oppressed by the uniquely evil United States.

Even more enraging to the Left was that, in these and other areas, Trump did not even appear to be apologetic for breaking the rules of the new ideology. In the early years of wokeism's ascendance, it was common for Republican politicians to avoid any topic or proposal that could be cast in such a light, and in the cases where they did push back, they often did so only meekly or apologetically. But Trump was neither meek nor apologetic, and he rushed headlong into these controversies and seemed to relish them. This made Trump an extraordinary threat, justifying a uniquely strong response.

Ironically, support for the new woke ideology is correlated along the lines of actual "privilege."[19] Wealthier, college-educated Americans, working in high-status and high-powered jobs, are much more likely to view the world in this way. Elites adhere to the ideology far more than many of the identity groups whose interests they purport to champion. As a result, nearly every powerful institution in the country was

CNN tonight
DON LEMON
DON'S TAKE
PRESIDENT TRUMP'S LONG HISTORY OF RACIST STATEMENTS AND ACTIONS

TRUMP'S RELATIONSHIP RUSSIA
GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN
23 14 28 09
BE
REASONS TRUMP COULD BE A RUSSIAN ASSET   CNN
NEWSROOM CNN

HARDBALL
BREAKING NEWS
HOUSE VOTES TO CONDEMN TRUMP'S RACIST TWEETS   MSNBC

quickly weaponized to meet the supposed threat of Trump.

One effect of this was in fundraising. In a trend that had begun under Obama, the richest areas of the country continued to turn Democratic, leading to a huge fundraising advantage for Democrats. In 2016, Hillary Clinton's campaign was able to raise about twice as much money through mid-October as Trump's and able to spend about 2.4 times as much on television advertising.[20]
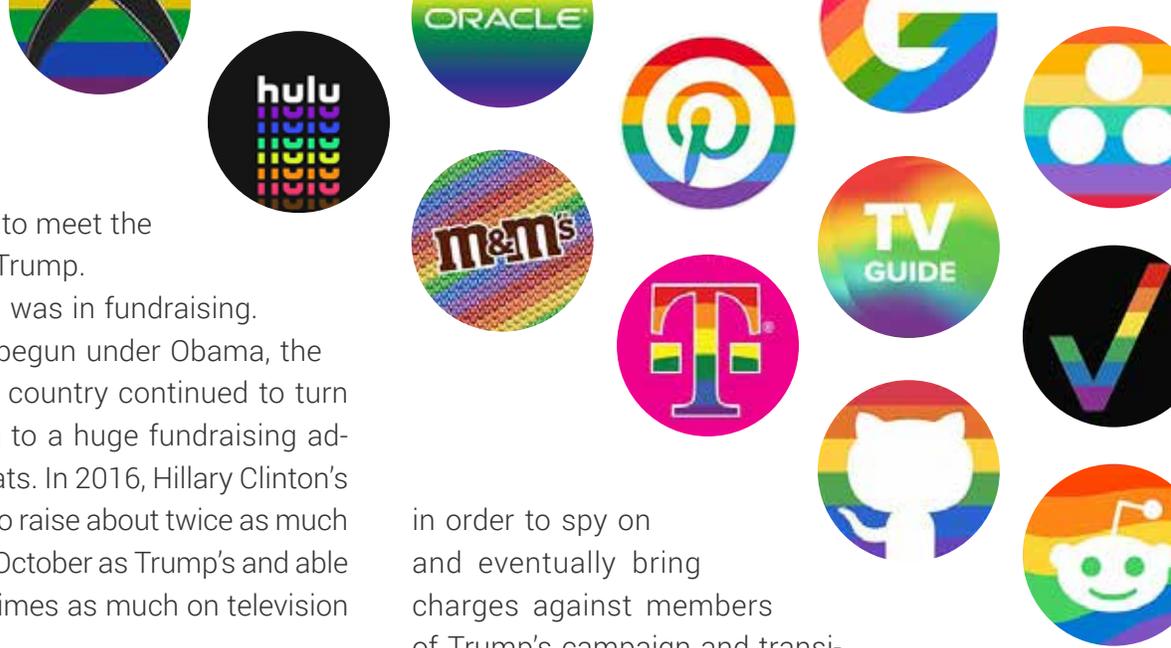
Another effect was in the media, which had long been biased but became much more so under Trump. In a precursor of what was to come in future elections, fact-checkers in 2016 promulgated bogus claims, arguing, for example, that it was false to say that Hillary Clinton had once supported building a wall, or had 'acid wash[ed], or bleach[ed]' her server, because, in fact, she had only supported a *fence* and had used a program called BleachBit rather than actual literal acid or bleach.[21] And some writers began to question whether the standard rules of journalism ought to apply to Trump at all. "If you view a Trump presidency as something that's potentially dangerous, then your reporting is going to reflect that," wrote a media columnist for the *New York Times* just prior to the 2016 election, attempting to justify the paper's obvious hostility toward him.[22]

In collaboration with deep-state government bureaucrats, the media also promulgated a fabricated theory that Trump was somehow the puppet of Russia, a claim which would eventually result in the first failed impeachment attempt against Trump. In the lead-up to that effort, government actors illegally manipulated evidence in order to spy on and eventually bring charges against members of Trump's campaign and transition team.

Corporations joined the pile on as well, ramping up their use of pressure campaigns in an increasing number of issue areas with only tenuous links to their economic well-being. Skills honed by certain corporations on cultural-economic issues like immigration came to be employed on a panoply of woke priority issues: LGBTQ advocacy, abortion, gun-control, and racial "inequity."[23] Over the course of Trump's presidency, even the Chamber of Commerce, once a reliable ally of conservatives, fully transitioned to an explicitly anti-Trumpian group.[24]

The reaction after Trump's victory at the institutional level would seem bizarre to those still working under the theory that the Left was composed of morally relativistic liberals, or even utopian progressives. Organizations which had previously tried to appear neutral openly mourned Hillary Clinton's loss, or even blamed themselves for it, implying a belief that their duty lay in wielding their status and power in order to prevent someone like Trump from being elected to office. Many resolved never to allow this to happen again, and they were largely successful in achieving their aims in 2020.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2020

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

While the Left's overwhelming institutional power was just enough to deliver Democrats the White House, Trump's 2020 campaign made encouraging electoral gains.

EVEN BY THE OFFICIAL VOTE tallies, the Trump coalition in 2020 proved remarkably resilient. Trump came within 43,000 votes of an electoral college tie that would have been decided by Republican congressional state delegations. The comparable margin for Mitt Romney in 2012 was around 450,000.

In the months since November 2020, numerous theories explaining why Trump lost have emerged. In some, President Trump suffered from a supposedly bungled coronavirus response. In others, his abrasive personality and leadership style proved to be simply too much for suburban women.[25] Still others continue to cling to "demographics are destiny" theories of politics, though notably this 2012-era delusion is more prominent among gullible Republican politicians than among savvier Democrats.

In an election as close as 2020, it is difficult to discount any potential negative. By official totals, after all, Trump would only have needed to convince a little less than 23,000 Biden voters to win. But these theories tend to dismiss, or at least downplay, what was by far the most important dynamic of the 2020 election. As elites became more and more captured by the new woke ideology, the institutions they control took more and more aggressive and coercive action against Trump. Though this led to some important and encouraging gains electorally, the institutional power ultimately was enough to secure the election for Biden.

Nowhere was this power more influential than around the infrastructure of the election itself. In 2020, woke institutions used the coronavirus as a pretext to unilaterally impose an entirely new

voting regime in states across the country.[26] This regime was, in many instances, directly contrary to state laws and imposed by circumventing the state legislatures. In the belief that it would benefit their party, Democrats made a concerted effort across the country to change voting procedures in order to dramatically increase mail-in and absentee voting while gutting nearly every kind of safeguard against voter fraud.

The tactics in each state differed, and many examples are likely already familiar, but Wisconsin is a representative example of the pattern.[27] In the lead-up to November 3, the most Democratic city in the state allowed early voting in every one of the city's parks well before the early voting start date. The Wisconsin Election Commission refused to clean more than 200,000 potentially duplicated names from voter rolls as required by state law. County clerks in Milwaukee and Dane Counties told voters to claim that they were "indefinitely confined," thereby exempting themselves incorrectly from state voter ID laws, and nearly a quarter of a million voters in the state did so, even though the pandemic was not a valid excuse. Standards were relaxed, and rejection rates for absentee ballots dropped precipitously, from 1.4% in November 2016 (and 1.8% in the 2020 primary), to 0.2%. The Election Commission excluded both the Green Party and Kanye West from appearing on the ballot on extremely dubious grounds.[28] The Green Party had earned around 31,000 votes in Wisconsin in 2016. By official vote tallies, Joe Biden beat Donald Trump in Wisconsin by 20,682 votes.

In other states, ballot applications were sent out unrequested, and ballots that returned were subject to greatly relaxed verification and signature-matching standards. In certain states, ballots were accepted and counted after election day. In Pennsylvania, the state Supreme Court ordered that received ballots should be accepted and counted even if they arrived without a postmark proving they were submitted before polls closed. In Arizona, counties decided to allow seniors to vote via video chat. Throughout the country, poll watchers were denied the ability to effectively observe the tallying of votes.

The media touted the weakened safeguards and abnormally low rejection rates of ballots across the country as an unquestionable success, and asserted, contrary to all evidence, that election fraud had been proven to be practically impossible. Courts were loath to intervene before or after the election, even in instances where their ruling would not affect the election's outcome. Elites framed any questioning of the new election practices in the terms of wokeism,

Photo ©Phil Roeder via Flickr.

calling their opponents white supremacists. This was enough to cause one Republican senator to apologize, bizarrely, to black voters in particular for considering an objection to certification of the vote.[29] The few congressmen who objected anyway were smeared as traitorous supporters of a "white supremacist" "insurrection."

The imposition of this new voting regime was funded and pushed by the most powerful forces in America, especially woke capital. Mark Zuckerberg alone donated around $400 million to voting efforts.[30] *Time* magazine (favorably) described the election effort as "a well-funded cabal of powerful people, ranging across industries and ideologies, working together behind the scenes to influence perceptions, change rules and laws, steer media coverage and control the flow of information."[31]

Such alliances among the various powerful sectors of American life were common in 2020. One notable example, though it likely ended up hurting Biden, was the massive support for the antifa/Black Lives Matter riots of the summer across all major institutions.

Corporations funded the groups, health experts excused the gatherings, politicians bailed out the rioters, and the mainstream media covered the riots, if at all, as perhaps fiery but mostly peaceful. One gathering of left-leaning politicos in the summer pondered how to court BLM rioters in order to secure their support in the event of a "street fight" after the election, even if Trump won.[32]

Big Tech meanwhile partnered with mainstream media and the academy, using the pretext of "fact-checking" to block political advertising and other information contrary to the ruling narrative. Perhaps the most egregious instance of corporate censorship was Twitter's and Facebook's blacklisting, assisted by a media blackout, of a *New York Post* story revealing the Biden family's corrupt dealings with China.

Although the allegations have since proven true, the campaign to block it achieved its desired result: one study from the Media Research Center suggests that the suppression of this story alone was enough to swing the election in Biden's favor.[33] Also likely significant but far more difficult to measure are the effects of other Big Tech efforts, such as Google's apparent manipulation of search results.[34]

The "fact-checking" regime also censored dissent from the approved COVID narrative, which was being used not only to push the new voting system but also to impose draconian lockdowns that hollowed out the Trump economy. The health and economic impacts of COVID ranked as top concerns in election polling, but their exact effect on the result is unclear. Voters still rated Trump highly on the economy, though less so on his overall response to the pandemic. There is some evidence, though unclear, that voters in states Biden flipped viewed Trump's coronavirus handling worse than voters in close states Trump kept. However, county-level analysis shows areas more directly affected by the pandemic, measured in terms of deaths per capita, cases per capita, or rises in unemployment, were more likely to swing *towards* Trump.[35] Areas that were lower on these metrics swung away from Trump. Meanwhile, the governor who oversaw one of the worst death rates in the world only grew in popularity and received an Emmy for his efforts. The effect of COVID, if present, seems to have been largely filtered through warped media-driven perceptions rather than experience, and likely was more influential among elite voters with higher institutional trust.

Nevertheless, faced with the COVID pandemic and the BLM-instigated rioting, outspent and opposed by every center of power in the country, Trump still managed to do much better than

> **Big Tech meanwhile partnered with mainstream media and the academy, using the pretext of 'fact-checking' to block political advertising and other information contrary to the ruling narrative.**

either Mitt Romney or John McCain and earned more votes than any Republican candidate in history. The Trump base proved to be solid, and the encouraging trends of 2016 only continued. Driven by its own elites, the Democratic Party wedded itself more than ever to the ruling woke ideology, deepening the divide within their own base between more affluent, college-educated elites and the rest of their supporters. Biden gained ground among elites across the board, while Trump gained ground among the rest of the country.

Counties with more bachelors and postgraduate degrees, and with higher median household incomes and projected job growth, swung even further away from Trump.[36] Though many post-election analyses have focused on suburban women, the losses were equally or more striking among suburban men. Biden's victory in Georgia, for example, was fueled by his

> **Wokeness is a problem and everyone knows it... But they don't want to say it out loud.”**
>
> *–JAMES CARVILLE*

popularity among affluent credentialed voters, rather than minorities. High-income, majority-college-graduate, and suburban precincts in Georgia swung 6 or 7 points away from Trump. Rural, non-college white, and majority black areas swung 1 point away. Majority Hispanic areas and areas where the population was more than 80% black swung 0.5 points toward Trump.[37] The rich congressional districts that had turned blue in 2018 for the most part did not come back, but this did not keep Republicans from nearly retaking the House.

Meanwhile, across the country Hispanic counties and precincts swung heavily towards Trump, as did urban counties. The rise in Hispanic support for Trump was especially striking in Florida and Texas, but seems to have happened nationwide.[38] Around 10% of Hispanic voters switched their vote from Clinton to Trump.[39] Support for Trump among black voters also increased. Trump's 2016 gains among working-class voters of all races either remained largely intact or improved. As Rep. Jim Banks noted in his post-election memo, Biden's support was strong among college professors, marketing professionals, bankers, and Wall Street, but Trump was the favored candidate of mechanics, small business owners, and custodians.[40]

Although many factors have of course contributed to these shifts, one stands out as a primary driver, the same one which helped elevate Trump to the White House four years earlier: the embrace of woke issues by the Democratic Party and its affiliated elites, and Trump's willingness to campaign on opposing them. College-educated, affluent voters have become increasingly captured by wokeism and an increasingly powerful part of the Democratic Party, alienating the rest of the country, which is much more conservative.[41] The average Republican donor and the average Republican voter now largely agree on most issues, though donors are somewhat to the right on economics. But the split between Democratic donors and voters is massive. Democratic donors are far to the left of the average Democratic voter on economic issues and globalism issues, and much further to the left on social issues.[42] A majority of black Democrats, for example, support transgender bathroom bans and 20-week abortion bans,[43] while white liberals are now empirically far to the left of black Americans on racial attitudes. Moreover, white liberals are more enthusiastic than Hispanics, blacks, and non-liberal whites about diversity as a primary aim, and they are much more likely to support increased immigration than the rest of their base.[44]

This polarization of the country along the lines of woke elitism has led to incredible institutional opposition for the Republican Party but encouraging electoral gains. Voters hated the ideas put forward by the woke elites, like open borders, critical race theory, or defunding the police, although they were popular on Twitter and among the political class on the Left. The growing chasm between the woke Democratic activist class and many of their own voters has become so large that even some in their own party have begun to sound the alarm.

After the lackluster performance by congressional Democrats in November, Rep. Abigail Spanberger (D-VA), Majority Whip Jim Clyburn (D-SC) and others blamed the woke branding their colleagues had added to the national brand. When someone asked Rep. Ruben Gallego (D-AZ) the day after the election what the party ought to do to "improve our work with the LatinX community," the congressman responded forcefully: "First start by not using the term Latinx."[45] Longtime Democratic operative James Carville put it even more bluntly in an interview with *Vox*, "You ever get the sense that people in faculty lounges in fancy colleges use a different language than ordinary people? They come up with a word like 'Latinx' that no one else uses. Or they use a phrase like 'communities of color.' I don't know anyone who speaks like that. [...] Wokeness is a problem and everyone knows it. It's hard to talk to anybody today — and I talk to lots of people in the Democratic Party — who doesn't say this. But they don't want to say it out loud. [...] [L]arge parts of the country view us as an urban, coastal, arrogant party, and a lot gets passed through that filter. That's a real thing. I don't give a damn what anyone thinks about it — it's a real phenomenon, and it's damaging to the party brand."[46]

But while some on the Left have dismissed Carville's concerns, there is evidence he is actually *understating* the problem posed to Democrats by their embrace of wokeism. In a revealing interview with *New York* magazine in March, left-wing data analyst David Shor detailed why:

> So as Democrats have traded non-college-educated voters for college-educated ones, white liberals' share of voice and clout in the Democratic Party has gone up. And since white voters are sorting on ideology more than nonwhite voters, we've ended up in a situation where white liberals are more left wing than Black and Hispanic

Democrats on pretty much every issue: taxes, health care, policing, and even on racial issues or various measures of "racial resentment." So as white liberals increasingly define the party's image and messaging, that's going to turn off nonwhite conservative Democrats and push them against us. [...]

[T]he fundamental problem is that Democrats have been relying on the support of roughly 90 percent of Black voters and 70 percent of Hispanic voters. So if Democrats elevate issues or theories that a large minority of nonwhite voters reject, it's going to be hard to keep those margins. Because these issues are strongly correlated with ideology. And Black conservatives and Hispanic conservatives don't actually buy into a lot of these intellectual theories of racism. They often have a very different conception of how to help the Black or Hispanic community than liberals do. And I don't think we can buy our way out of this trade-off. Most voters are not liberals. If we polarize the electorate on ideology — or if nationally prominent Democrats raise the salience of issues that polarize the electorate on ideology — we're going to lose a lot of votes. [...]

I think there's a very strong empirical argument that Donald Trump was the main driver of the polarization we've seen since 2016.

He just personally embodies this large cultural divide between cosmopolitan college-educated voters and a large portion of non-college-educated voters. Those divides take a lot of different forms: attitudes toward race, attitudes toward gender, opinions on what kinds of things you're allowed to say, or how you should conduct yourself. [...]

Republicans would have been a *lot* worse off with a narrow majority coalition — that had a Romney-esque split between college and non-college voters — than they were with the Trump coalition. So I think the Trump era has been very good for the Republican Party, even if they now, momentarily, have to accept this very, very, very thin Democratic trifecta. Because if these coalition changes are durable, the GOP has very rosy long-term prospects for dominating America's federal institutions.[47]

It is worth reiterating this point one more time: the conventional media narrative that Trump appealed exclusively to a shrinking base of old, white, rural Americans resentful of changing demographics has no basis in reality. The truth is that Trump actually *broadened* the Republican base by tying Democrats to their most unpopular positions: wokeism, and its related issues. And should Republicans continue to successfully deploy this strategy, there would appear to be ample room to expand the party's coalition even further in the elections to come.

WINNING AGAIN IN 2024 & BEYOND

Republicans should focus on four concrete areas if they hope to successfully recapture power in the coming elections.

As should now be clear from the last two presidential elections, continuing to confront the Democratic Party's woke ideology has the potential to chip away at a much larger share of the Democrat vote without losing the base that Trump built. But while this confrontation can and should take many forms, there are four concrete areas that Republicans should focus on if they hope to successfully recapture power in the coming elections. Those areas are as follows:

Securing our elections.

The woke Left considers it their top priority to solidify the new election regime and extend it even further. As the previously cited left-wing data analyst David Shor has explained it: "Basically, we have this small window right now to pass redistricting reform and create states. And if we don't use this window, we will almost certainly

lose control of the federal government and not be in a position to pass laws again potentially for a decade."[48] A different left-wing group puts this imperative more bluntly: "HR1 or We're Fucked."[49]

H.R. 1/S. 1 universally mandates the worst aspects of the 2020 election standards while extending them much, much further. Among many other things, H.R. 1/S.1 would:
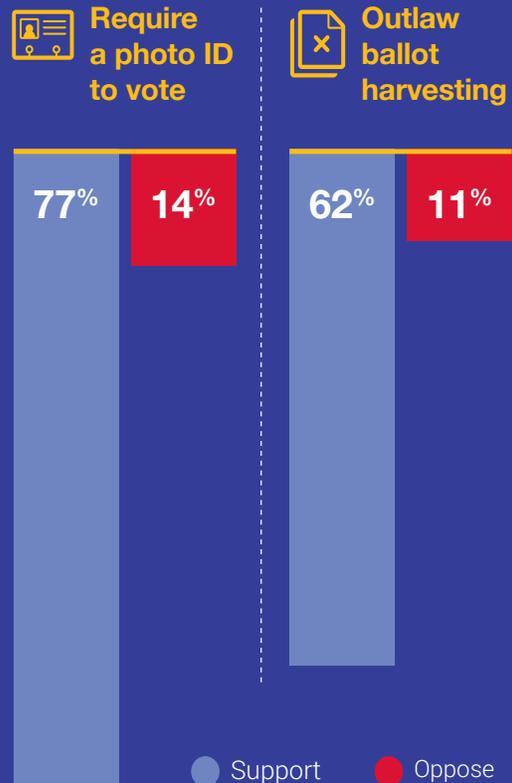
★ Remove all voter ID requirements.
★ Require automatic registration of all individuals in various state databases, registering many non-citizens.
★ Require no-excuse absentee ballots to be sent out, while removing security measures and witness requirements and forcing states to receive ballots up to 10 days late.
★ Allow a single partisan official to unilaterally override ballot rejections due to mismatched signatures,

granting Democrats de facto veto power over signature requirements.
★ Allow unrestricted ballot harvesting.
★ Limit the ability of election officials to verify voters' eligibility and remove ineligible voters from the voters rolls, while also limiting the ability of independent organizations to examine and verify the voter rolls' accuracy.
★ Require states to allow felons on parole to vote.

Support for Election Integrity

Require a photo ID to vote

| 77% | 14% |

Outlaw ballot harvesting

| 62% | 11% |

● Support   ● Oppose

Source: Honest Elections Project survey, March 4-10, 2021.

Photo ©Anthony Crider via Flickr.

In the immediate term, Republicans need to do everything in their power to oppose this. Security of elections and public faith in the process are absolutely essential to the stability and health of our country. However, for self-interested reasons the woke Left has decided that it is in their interest to undermine both. They have the full support of the institutions and corporations who established the 2020 voting regime in the first place. These corporations now threaten and boycott states who make even the most modest attempts at restoring fairness and security.

As is often the case, attacks on politicians who fight back are on woke grounds. Election integrity measures are cast as attacks on various identity groups. The woke Left professes to believe that non-white people in particular are incapable of figuring out how to register to vote or acquire any form of identification. This belief is so strong that Joe Biden could claim of Georgia's modest voting bill that it makes "Jim Crow look like Jim Eagle."

Republicans should never, ever, accept this framing. Securing the integrity of the election is not just morally right and existentially necessary for our republic, it is a political winner. Americans support voter ID requirements by 77% to 14%.[50] This includes overwhelming majorities of black voters, Hispanic voters, and white voters; Biden voters and Trump voters; Democrats, Republicans, and independents. Heavy majorities across the board, again including minority voters, also support ID requirements for absentee voting. Voters likewise believe, 62% to 11%, that practices such as ballot harvesting ought to be made illegal. Once voters know what H.R. 1/S. 1 contains, support for the bill drops to 28%. Voters also disapprove of same-day voter registration, automatic voter registration, and sending out unrequested ballots.[51]

These proposals only gain popularity in the rarefied air of the woke boardrooms, college faculty lounges, and high-society cocktail parties. The rest of the country, including those whose interests the woke profess to champion, overwhelmingly prefer a free, fair, and secure system of elections.

Rebuilding the American family.

In November 2018, American Principles Project commissioned a survey of over 5,000 voters in the aftermath of the midterm elections. The results, which we detailed in a report the following year, pointed to one crucial but often overlooked fact: being married and/or coming from an intact family are strong predictors of holding conservative views and voting Republican, while those who are unmarried and come from a broken family are far more likely to be left-wing Democrats.[52]

By all accounts, this once again held true in the past election. According to national polling, Donald Trump won married voters by 9 points over Joe Biden, while Biden carried unmarried voters by 19 points.[53] A more rigorous county-level voting analysis showed that marriage rates were the strongest demographic predictor of 2020 votes, greater than race, education, and income.[54] And a different county-level analysis indicated that higher fertility rates also corresponded with more votes for Trump.[55]

Although the evidence isn't necessarily clear on why this is the case, there are a number of possible, interrelated reasons. In a 2017 article for *Politico*, University of Virginia sociologist W. Bradford Wilcox and Vijay Menon identified a few: Conservatives and Republicans are "more likely to embrace marriage-minded values." Married people are more prosperous and less likely to be

2020 Marriage Gap

● Trump   ● Biden

Married Voters
- 54%
- 45%

Unmarried Voters
- 40%
- 59%

Source: The Fox News Voter Analysis, October 26-November 3, 2020.

dependent on government, making the GOP a more natural home for them than the Democratic Party. And certain conservative and Republican personality traits make them "more likely to form and maintain stable marriages and families."[56]

The family also happens to be one of the last major social institutions not controlled by the woke Left. While wokeism has marched through almost every other part of American society—taking command of education, the workplace, media and entertainment, and even many places of worship—the family remains one of few places where one can still find safety from the Left's ever encroaching influence. For some, it may be the only place.

But as wokeism has ascended in recent years, the family has gone into serious decline. At the beginning of the COVID pandemic, marriage rates in the US had dropped to the lowest levels in the nation's recorded history, and early indications are they have fallen even further since then.[57] Moreover, Americans seem to be

ascribing less importance to marriage than ever before. According to a December 2020 Gallup poll, only 29% of respondents said they believed it was important for couples with children to marry, down from 49% in 2006.[58] And increasingly, couples are no longer even having children, as illustrated by the CDC's alarming finding that America's 2020 birth rate was the lowest on record.[59]

While most leaders across the political spectrum will publicly lament these developments, at least some on the Left are acknowledging the political benefit this provides them. In a different interview with New York magazine, for example, the aforementioned David Shor noted that as a result of the average age of first marriage rising by over a decade, voters are holding onto their left-wing views later into life: "We previously were going to start having people turn more conservative at 26. Now that's been pushed up to 34 or 36. That's actually very meaningful in terms of votes and in terms of how much longer we can expect millennials and zoomers to stay overwhelmingly Democratic."[60]

For Republicans, however, the continued collapse of the family would be nothing short of a disaster. Given the centrality of married voters to the GOP's coalition, rebuilding the family is not just important for the good of the country; it is absolutely necessary for the party's long-term survival. Already, some Republican lawmakers have begun to put forward proposals to help economically incentivize family formation and bolster working families. These are great steps in the right direction. But every GOP member must recognize that turning around the distressing trends detailed above ought to be a pressing priority. Otherwise, the party's fortunes in the coming decades, and the likelihood of successfully beating back wokeism, appear increasingly grim.

Fighting woke-captured institutions.

Perhaps the most significant change in our politics over the last several years has been the total capture by wokeism of almost every single American institution: higher education, public education, corporate America, Big Tech platforms, professional sports leagues, the NCAA, the intelligence community, the military, major denominations within Christianity, major "center-right" political organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, the media, and so on. Almost nothing has been left untouched. Some mock the Right's distress at the woke hegemony, which demands lip service from even the Dr. Seuss estate or Mr. Potato Head, but the fact that nearly every part of our society is forced to swear fealty to woke ideology ought to alarm everyone.

Conservatives need to understand what of our current arrangement is prudential and what is inalienable principle. The institutions we may seek to preserve have in many cases already been hollowed out. Many now actively undermine and destroy the very goods they are meant to further. What we seek to preserve in society via governmental restraint is in some cases furthering its destruction at the hands of quasi-governmental monopolistic powers. The long march of the woke Left through every center of cultural and political power, and their abuse of that power to further their destructive ideological ends, has led to the total collapse of Americans' faith in institutions and in each other. The danger of this should be obvious, but Republicans must recognize that any attempt at a cure will have to be hands-on, confrontational, and ambitious.

These institutions may be powerful, but they aren't popular. Consider Big Tech, for
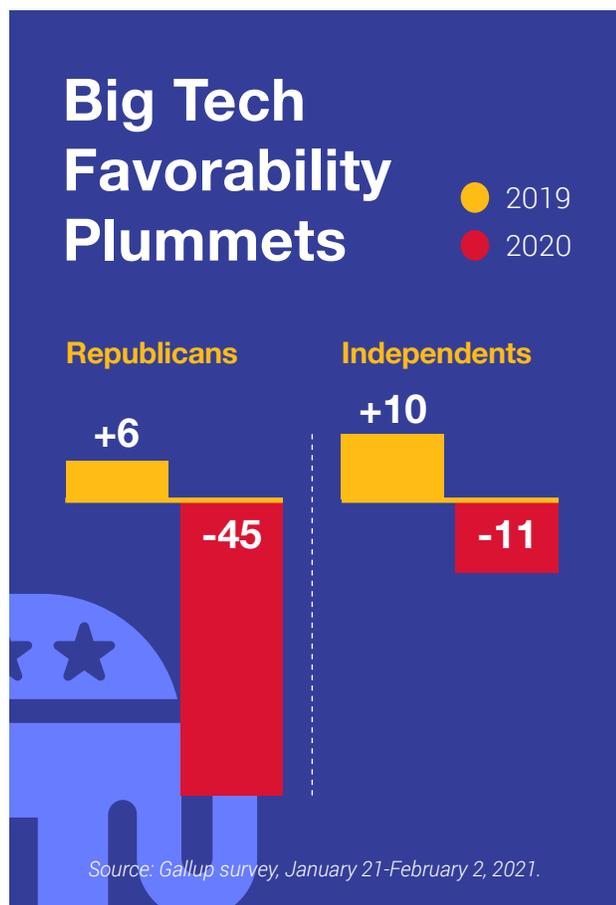
example: according to Gallup, the net favorability of Big Tech platforms has plummeted among Republicans and independents, dropping an eye-popping 51 and 21 points, respectively, from mid-2019 to early 2021.[61] Trust in traditional media is below 50%, with majorities stating that they believe journalists purposely mislead the public with deliberate lies and that most news organizations are concerned with promoting an ideology rather than informing the public.[62] Confidence in institutions of higher education, likewise, are sinking to new lows.[63] Among younger people, it is difficult to find a single institution—tech companies, Wall Street, the media, every branch of the federal government, even state and local government—with majority trust.[64]

Conservatives are eager for a politician willing to take on the woke institutions. A February

2021 survey found that among Republican and Republican-leaning voters, 49% said that for a candidate to win their vote, it was most important that they "[w]on't back down in a fight with the Democrats"—the highest of all the qualities polled. Second-most necessary was supporting Trump's America First agenda, while third-most was being "outspoken against woke, progessive ideology and cancel culture." Fourth-most crucial was treating the media as an extension of the Democratic Party.[65]

There are ample opportunities to oppose the woke takeover of institutions even at the state level. Conservatives should learn, for example, from the Idaho state legislature's attempt to curtail the state-sponsored anti-Americanism being taught at the state's publicly funded universities.[66] Florida Governor Ron DeSantis also has shown remarkable resourcefulness in leveraging his state's power to curb the tyranny of Big Tech companies.[67] The woke Left hates federalism even more than their predecessors did. To the woke, the political power of local, tangible communities is a direct affront to what they consider the primary authority of global identity groups. This has driven a major push among all institutions to remove every remnant of local or state control from governors and legislatures. While the fight at the national level is absolutely crucial, the situation for states and localities may be even more dire. Leaders at these levels of government should act before power is finally wrested away from them.

To summarize: fighting woke-captured institutions is the right thing to do, necessary for saving the American experiment, and an incredibly popular position with voters. But how should Republicans go about doing so concretely? Following are a few ideas:

Big Tech Favorability Plummets

● 2019
● 2020

Republicans

Independents

+6

+10

-45

-11

Source: Gallup survey, January 21-February 2, 2021.

Undercutting the Media's Influence

Republicans ought to recognize the legacy media for what they are: partisan agents of their opponents' campaigns. Delegitimize them and reject their bad-faith premises. Boycott left-wing shows and platforms, and make and promote our own.

Holding Big Tech Accountable

Republicans must stop defending the generous handouts to Big Tech which they have historically been granted. Reform Section 230 and pursue aggressive antitrust enforcement. Enforce campaign finance law and recognize Big Tech's interference in elections as the in-kind contribution that it is. Consider anything and everything to restore conservatives' ability to participate meaningfully in the most powerful public square in history.

Fighting Woke Capital

Republicans cannot continue fighting for lower tax rates or less stringent regulation for the same mega-corporations that despise conservatives. Examine the extent to which legal exemptions, or federal and state funds including pension funds, are going to support the companies that seek to extort even more from the government. If the GOP goes on reflexively supporting laws in all circumstances that are maximally favorable to major business, then why should those businesses care that conservatives are upset about their other activities?

It is no virtue, and certainly no conservative virtue, to sit back and allow corporations to single-handedly set the boundaries of acceptable legislation or political opinion. Appeals to Reagan or the free market to justify surrender to

the woke boardroom are intellectually dishonest and deeply unconvincing to voters.

Dismantling the Education Cartel

Republicans should decouple the federal government from student loans and research grants, and instead incentivize vocational programs and trade schools. Where possible, we should stop requiring or favoring people with college degrees in the hiring process, and perhaps pass legislation to accomplish the same—occupational licensing reform, but for diplomas.

It is also finally time to tie federal funding for schooling directly to kids rather than the educational institutions that are failing them, giving parents the ability to use the money to pursue the best course for their own child.

Reining in the Deep State

As has become especially clear in recent months, the defense and law enforcement establishments have been corrupted by woke partisans increasingly intent on politicizing these especially powerful institutions. Before the

2020 election, it was reported that President Trump had planned to remove the head of the Department of Defense, the CIA, and the FBI were he to secure re-election.[68] This was in addition to an executive order signed just prior to the election making it easier to fire career deep-staters.[69] Trump realized what had to be done. Unfortunately, he just realized it too late.

Conservatives should take a lesson from Trump's experience and continue the work he started. This means, at the very least, Republicans must consider tying continued funding of these institutions to reforms which will ensure they act impartially and are not unduly influenced by ideology or politics. If the deep state is permitted by our own inaction to continue abusing their power with impunity, the country as we know it will not survive.

Affirming America's fundamental goodness.

A central tenet of woke orthodoxy is that America is irredeemably, systemically, inherently evil. These appeals, often made on behalf of one identity group or another, seek to divide the country into oppressor and oppressed. This is the ideology that in 2019 led the *New York Times* to declare the real foundation and legacy of America to be slavery.[70] The following spring, this declaration won the Pulitzer Prize. In the summer, the ideology flared out in violent riots, burning down businesses and neighborhoods, and destroying or defacing monuments to American soldiers and statesmen, even including Abraham Lincoln. In the fall, it led the American elite to let pass the 400th anniversary of the pilgrims' landing at Plymouth with little more than a few scattered, embarrassed comments. The inherent and unforgivable sinfulness of America is taught in schools, mouthed in the media, and funded or supported by a large number of the country's corporations.

Voters Reject Anti-Americanism

● Agree   ● Disagree

8%	73%	65%
92%	27%	35%
I'm proud to be an American	Removing statues of George Washington	Removing statues of Christopher Columbus

Source: American Principles Project/Spry Strategies 10-state survey, July 2020.

It is also incredibly unpopular. American Principles Project's battleground state polling from mid-July of 2020 found that huge majorities of voters in every state we polled described themselves as proud to be an American and were opposed to removing monuments of European explorers and settlers or American founding fathers. They were also deeply divided about using the 1619 Project's framing of American history in the curricula of young students.[71] In nearly every case, these issues resulted in pronounced splits among voters of different income and education levels. But generally, it is clear that wealthy, college-educated elites believe that America is a far worse place than do the people whose interests they profess to represent. The prevalence of woke adherents in the culture-making institutions may make anti-Americanism seem like a popular cause, but it is absolutely not.

However, as hatred of America is correlated with the likelihood of having a bully pulpit, affirming America's fundamental goodness will require a stiffer spine than many politicians seem to possess. Republicans should never have waited until Kamala Harris was comfortable agreeing before affirming clearly and loudly that America is not a racist country. Their recent willingness to do so is a step in the right direction, but Republicans should learn from and emulate the courage of institutions like the Claremont Institute, which was ready to say so last June.[72] No Republican should ever again feel as if the proper response to the widespread, divisive, and hateful attack on America is to suggest getting rid of Columbus Day.[73] GOP leaders should instead continue their efforts to eliminate racist "critical race theory" training sessions for employees, and racist anti-American curricula from schools or standardized testing.

> **As hatred of America is correlated with the likelihood of having a bully pulpit, affirming America's fundamental goodness will require a stiffer spine than many politicians seem to possess.**

Woke ideologues also openly despise America's founding, and America's founding documents. To them, the Constitution stands unjustly in the way of their power. The Declaration of Independence they treat as a bizarre lie. Woke leftists push the oppressor/oppressed distinction as the primary lens through which to examine both documents. The central principles of both are either dismissed outright or attacked in order to prosecute the case against the Founders and the country they founded. If America is racist systemically, the foundational documents of the American regime are seen as the establishment of this racist system. The woke Left pushes instead for a fundamental restructuring of our regime away from equality under God and under the law and towards a regime that hands out weapons to favored identity groups to subdue the "oppressors." Ironically, these structural reforms usually seem to have the intent of increasing the power of small, concentrated elite enclaves. Conservatives must oppose these attacks and re-emphasize the truth of America's founding documents.

Opposing critical race theory, the 1619 Project, and woke identity politics, while affirming America's fundamental goodness, ought to be a central message of the Republican Party. The contrast between the two parties on this issue is immense, and perhaps the single greatest political asset the GOP has. The tenacity with which the affluent elite cling to woke ideology makes it difficult for the opposition to disavow it and wins the rest of the country to our side. In short, defending America against woke attacks is morally right, existentially necessary, and politically advantageous.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

CONCLUSION

The challenges posed to this country by the rise of wokeism are severe—perhaps more so than any other threat in recent history. Considering the power and influence the woke Left wields, and the victories it has already achieved, it would be easy to despair of effectively fighting it.

However, the truth is that the rise of wokeism has also created a significant opportunity for conservatives and the Republican Party, as evidenced by the successes of Donald Trump. While the woke Left may dominate the halls of power, they do not have the support of the American people. And by drawing attention to the worst woke excesses and leading the charge against them, GOP leaders can both grow the party and win elections as well as (and most importantly) defend our country's foundations from destruction.

In the almost six years since it was introduced as a campaign slogan, we now have a better understanding than ever of what it will take to "Make America Great Again." Now is the time for Republicans to put that plan into action.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

ENDNOTES

1 "Early Keys to Winning the Majority in 2022," Congressional Leadership Fund, March 2, 2021: https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/20494059/early-keys-to-the-majority-2.pdf.

2 "Cheney On The Future Of The GOP & 'Heartless' Approach From The Biden Administration," Congresswoman Liz Cheney, February 7, 2021: https://cheney.house.gov/2021/02/07/cheney-on-the-future-of-the-gop-heartless-approach-from-the-biden-administration.

3 Jim Banks, "URGENT: Cementing GOP as the Working-Class Party," March 30, 2021: https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/20534328-banks-working-class-memo.

4 Trump's margin of defeat in Wisconsin, Arizona and Georgia added up to roughly 43,000 votes. If he had won those three states, the electoral college would have been tied, and Trump would have likely won the House vote that followed, as Republicans controlled a majority of state delegations.

5 "Growth & Opportunity Project," Republican National Committee: https://online.wsj.com/public/resources/documents/RNCreport03182013.pdf.

6 "Daniels explains call for social truce," CNN, March 10, 2011: https://politicalticker.blogs.cnn.com/2011/03/10/daniels-explains-call-for-social-truce.

7 Some of the process changes proposed in the report had the clear intent of privileging candidates who could raise lots of money over those who could muster strong grassroots support. This was in line with the intra-party fight of the time, where operatives raised huge amounts of money from business interests to oppose Tea Party firebrand candidates in Republican primaries. See: Jonathan Martin and Maggie Haberman, "Right blasts RNC 'autopsy'," Politico, March 18, 2013: https://www.politico.com/story/2013/03/rnc-autopsy-may-rile-up-base-089010.

8 Frank Cannon, Maggie Gallagher and Rich Danker, "Building a Winning GOP Coalition: The Lessons of 2012," American Principles Project: https://americanprinciplesproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/BuildingAWinningGOPCoalition.pdf.

9 "Republican Exit Polls," CNN: https://www.cnn.com/election/2016/primaries/polls

10 Kyle Cheney, "Trump kills GOP autopsy," Politico, March 4, 2016: https://www.politico.com/story/2016/03/donald-trump-gop-party-reform-220222.

11 Trump led in the RCP polling average from July 20, 2015 onward, except for three days in November 2015 when Ben Carson briefly led the race by a very small margin (24.8% to 24.6%). See: "2016 Repubican Presidential Nomination," RealClearPolitics: https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2016/president/us/2016_republican_presidential_nomination-3823.html.

12 "The Economist/YouGov Poll" March 10-12, 2016: https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/055qdf83nv/econTabReport.pdf. (See Q.99.)

13 Nate Cohn, "Precinct Data Shows Rich, White Neighborhoods Flipping Democratic in 2016. Will It Last?" The New York Times, July 27, 2018: https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/07/27/upshot/white-voters-precinct-analysis.html.

14 Amanda Sakuma, "Trump Did Better With Blacks, Hispanics Than Romney in '12: Exit Polls," NBC News, November 9, 2016: https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/2016-election-day/trump-did-better-blacks-hispanics-romney-12-exit-polls-n681386.

15 Anecdotally, many of the reasons given by voters in Obama-Trump counties for their switch was their desire to have someone "shake up" the Washington elite. See, for example: Dave Wasserman, "The One County In America That Voted In A Landslide For Both Trump And Obama," FiveThirtyEight, November 9, 2017: https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/the-one-county-in-america-that-voted-in-a-landslide-for-both-trump-and-obama; Stanley Greenberg and Nancy Zdunkewicz, "Macomb County in the Age of Trump," Roosevelt Institute, March 9, 2017: https://rooseveltinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/RI-March2017-polling-memo-201703.pdf.

16 Harry Enten, "Voters Used To See Moderation In Trump. Not Anymore." FiveThirtyEight, January 5, 2018: https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/voters-think-trump-has-moved-to-the-right.

17 Peter Aitken, "Surprising percentage of college students find violent censorship 'acceptable' to some degree," Fox News, October 2, 2020: https://www.foxnews.com/us/college-students-violent-censorship-acceptable.

18 One poll, for example, found that the public as a whole supported preventing BLM protests or Orthodox Jewish funeral gatherings on public health grounds at similar rates (61% for each). Those with a four-year degree, however, treated these groups very differently: 74% supported preventing the funeral gatherings, while only 63% supported preventing the protests. Among those

with more than a four year degree, this split was 78% to 42%. See: Jay P. Greene, Albert Cheng and Ian Kingsbury, "Are Educated People More Anti-Semitic?" Tablet, March 29, 2021: https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/news/articles/are-educated-people-more-anti-semitic-jay-greene-albert-cheng-ian-kingsbury.

19   Darel E. Paul, "Culture War as Class War," First Things, August 2018: "https://www.firstthings.com/article/2018/08/culture-war-as-class-war.

20   Jacob Pramuk, "Trump spent about half of what Clinton did on his way to the presidency," CNBC, November 9, 2016: https://www.cnbc.com/2016/11/09/trump-spent-about-half-of-what-clinton-did-on-his-way-to-the-presidency.html. As David Shor has noted, this did not always help. Political staffers were also elites, and so misjudged what would appeal to the crucial non-elite swing voters. According to Shor, his analysis showed that Hillary's "Mirrors" ad, which was well-received among the pundit class, and which the Clinton campaign spent a lot of money airing, actually made voters slightly more likely to vote for Trump. See: Noah Smith, "Noah Smith interviews David Shor," Online video clip, YouTube, February 19, 2021: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQ8UDzUvMg0.

21   "Fact Checks of the Third Presidential Debate," The New York Times, October 19, 2016: https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/10/19/us/elections/fact-check-debate.html; Eugene Kiely, "Trump, Pence 'Acid Wash' Facts," FactCheck.org, September 8, 2016: https://www.factcheck.org/2016/09/trump-pence-acid-wash-facts.

22   Jim Rutenberg, "Trump Is Testing the Norms of Objectivity in Journalism," The New York Times, August 7, 2016: https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/08/business/balance-fairness-and-a-proudly-provocative-presidential-candidate.html.

23   Mark Strassman, "North Carolina faces business boycott over anti-LGBT law," CBS News, March 30, 2016: https://www.cbsnews.com/news/north-carolina-faces-business-boycott-over-anti-lgbt-law; Courtney Connley, "Jack Dorsey, Emily Weiss and 185 other CEOs sign letter calling abortion bans 'bad for business'," CNBC, June 10, 2019: cnbc.com/2019/06/09/nearly-200-ceos-sign-letter-calling-abortion-bans-bad-for-business.html; Jack Moore, "NRA Boycott: Full List of Companies That Cut Ties With Gun Lobby Over Florida Shooting," Newsweek, February 24, 2018: https://www.newsweek.com/nra-boycott-full-list-companies-have-cut-ties-gun-lobby-over-florida-shooting-819050; Jennifer Calfas, "Here's How Much Colin Kaepernick Will Make in His Controversial New Ad Deal With Nike, According to Sports Experts," Money, September 4, 2018: https://money.com/colin-kaepernick-nike-deal.

24   Sasha Abramsky, "The US Chamber of Commerce Says Trump Is Bad for Business," The Nation, July 28, 2020: https://www.thenation.com/article/politics/trump-big-pharma-executive-orders.

25   This theory has quite a few wrinkles—among them, an indication from some of the (albeit unreliable) exit polling that Trump's temperament was rated more highly in 2020 than in 2016, while Biden's temperament overall was rated similarly to Clinton's.

26   For a more detailed analysis of election irregularities in 2020, see: Peter Navarro, "The Navarro Report": https://peternavarro.com/the-navarro-report.

27   "How The Wisconsin Elections Commission Destroyed Fair Elections In Wisconsin," MacIver Institute, November 5, 2020: https://www.maciverinstitute.com/2020/11/how-the-wisconsin-elections-commission-destroyed-fair-elections-in-wisconsin.

28   They rejected the Green Party's signatures on the grounds that the vice presidential candidate had allegedly moved while the signatures were being collected, making her listed address technically incorrect. They rejected Kanye West's signatures on the grounds that they were allegedly received 14 seconds late—although according to West's lawyer, she had in fact arrived three minutes early and found the doors locked. Similar tactics were used throughout the country, with predictable results. Precincts with more than 10% third-party vote share in 2016 shifted from going narrowly for Trump (R+0.7) to narrowly favoring Biden (D+2.5). See: Ashlyn Still and Ted Mellnik, "Democrats gained in nearly every battleground state, running up margins in cities," The Washington Post: https://www.washingtonpost.com/elections/election-results/president-2020.

29   Mike Ives and Jim Rutenberg, "A Republican senator from Oklahoma apologizes to Black constituents for seeking to disenfranchise them." The New York Times, January 15, 2021: https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/15/us/politics/lankford-apology-election.html.

30   "Mark Zuckerberg donated $400M to help local election offices during pandemic," The Independent, November 11, 2020: https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/mark-zuckerberg-donation-election-facebook-covid-b1721007.html.

31   Molly Ball, "The Secret History of the Shadow Campaign That Saved the 2020 Election," Time, February 4, 2021: https://time.com/5936036/secret-2020-election-campaign.

32   "Preventing a Disrupted Presidential Election and Transition," August 3, 2020: https://www.judicialwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Transition-Integrity-Project-Report.pdf

33 "FACT: Big Media and Big Tech Stole the 2020 Election," NewsBusters, November 9, 2020: https://www.newsbusters.org/blogs/nb/nb-staff/2020/11/09/fact-big-media-and-big-tech-stole-2020-election.

34 Allum Bokhari, "Five Times Google Was Caught Red Handed on Bias and Censorship," Breitbart, October 31, 2020: https://www.breitbart.com/tech/2020/10/31/five-times-google-was-caught-red-handed-on-bias-and-censorship.

35 Andre Tartar, David Ingold, Jeremy C.F. Lin and Paul Murray, "Covid Hotspots Stuck With Trump in Close Presidential Race," Bloomberg, November 4, 2020: https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2020-election-results-trump-vote-covid-deaths.

36 Jed Kolko, "Election Showed a Wider Red-Blue Economic Divide," The New York Times, November 11, 2020: https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/11/upshot/election-red-blue-economic-divide.html.

37 Nate Cohn, Matthew Conlen and Charlie Smart, "Detailed Turnout Data Shows How Georgia Turned Blue," The New York Times, November 17, 2020: https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/11/17/upshot/georgia-precinct-shift-suburbs.html.

38 Weiyi Cai and Ford Fessenden, "Immigrant Neighborhoods Shifted Red as the Country Chose Blue," The New York Times, December 20, 2020: https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/12/20/us/politics/election-hispanics-asians-voting.html.

39 Eric Levitz, "David Shor on Why Trump Was Good for the GOP and How Dems Can Win in 2022," New York, March 3, 2021: https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2021/03/david-shor-2020-democrats-autopsy-hispanic-vote-midterms-trump-gop.html.

40 Jim Banks, "URGENT: Cementing GOP as the Working-Class Party," March 30, 2021: https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/20534328-banks-working-class-memo.

41 Warren Henry, "How College-Educated Whites Are Polarizing And Fracturing The Democratic Party," The Federalist, October 1, 2019: https://thefederalist.com/2019/10/01/how-college-educated-whites-are-polarizing-and-fracturing-the-democratic-party.

42 @dbroockman, "Main finding: there is a disconnect between the donors and voters in each party, but it varies by party. Republican donors are fairly aligned with Republican voters on social issues, but *way* to their right on economic issues," Twitter, April, 27, 2020: https://twitter.com/dbroockman/status/1254924462194974721/photo/1.The elite wing of the Republican party is also out of step on social issues. Republicans who prefer the Republican Party to Trump (as good a proxy for elite Republican attitudes as anything) are much less likely to support the Supreme Court overturning Roe v. Wade or Obergefell v. Hodges. See: "AEI Polling Report: Volume 7, Issue 3," American Enterprise Institute, March 2021: https://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/AEI-Polling-Report-March-2021.pdf.

43 "One Republican Party, Different Democratic Parties," Echelon Insights, July 23-27, 2019: http://echeloninsights.com/wp-content/uploads/Echelon-Insights-Party-Social-and-Cultural-Divides-2019.pdf.

44 @ZachG932, "2/n Increase among white democrats was so sharp that the divide between them (~54%) and their non-white counterparts (~37.8%) on this question has never been wider." Twitter, March 29, 2021: https://twitter.com/ZachG932/status/1376632752737505284.

45 @RubenGallego, "First start by not using the term Latinx. Second we have to be in front of them year round not just election years. That is what we did in AZ." Twitter, November 4, 2020: https://twitter.com/RubenGallego/status/1324071039085670401.

46 Sean Illing, "'Wokeness is a problem and we all know it'," Vox, April 27, 2021: https://www.vox.com/22338417/james-carville-democratic-party-biden-100-days.

47 Eric Levitz, "David Shor on Why Trump Was Good for the GOP and How Dems Can Win in 2022," New York, March 3, 2021: https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2021/03/david-shor-2020-democrats-autopsy-hispanic-vote-midterms-trump-gop.html.

48 Ibid.

49 "HR1 Or We're Fucked," Vote Save America: https://votesaveamerica.com/forthepeople.

50 Jason Snead, "Injecting Reality into the Election Reform Debate," Honest Elections Project, March 23, 2021: https://www.honestelections.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Memo-on-Voters-and-Elections-1.pdf.

51 "The Economist/YouGov Poll," March 27-30, 2021: https://docs.cdn.yougov.com/1kbp8xdx49/econTabReport.pdf.

52 Frank Cannon, Terry Schilling and Paul Dupont, "Family First: Reclaiming the GOP's Forgotten Constituency," American Principles Project: https://americanprinciplesproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/family-first-republican-forgotten-constituency.pdf

53 "Fox News Voter Analysis," Fox News: https://www.foxnews.com/elections/2020/general-results/voter-analysis.

54   Peyton Roth and W. Bradford Wilcox, "Married Americans Keep Voting Red," The American Conservative, February 9, 2021: https://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/married-americans-keep-voting-red.

55   Lyman Stone, "The Conservative Fertility Advantage," Institute for Family Studies, November 18, 2020: https://ifstudies.org/blog/the-conservative-fertility-advantage.

56   W. Bradford Wilcox and Vijay Menon, "No, Republicans Aren't Hypocrites on Family Values," Politico Magazine, November 28, 2017: https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/11/28/no-republicans-arent-hypocrites-on-family-values-215873.

57   Gaby Galvin, "U.S. Marriage Rate Hits Historic Low," U.S. News & World Report, April 29, 2020: https://www.usnews.com/news/healthiest-communities/articles/2020-04-29/us-marriage-rate-drops-to-record-low.

58   Jeffrey M. Jones, "Is Marriage Becoming Irrelevant?" Gallup, December 28, 2020: https://news.gallup.com/poll/316223/fewer-say-important-parents-married.aspx.

59   Brady E. Hamilton, Ph.D., Joyce A. Martin, M.P.H., and Michelle J.K. Osterman, M.H.S., "Births: Provisional Data for 2020," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, May 2021: https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/vsrr/vsrr012-508.pdf.

60   Eric Levitz, "David Shor's Postmortem of the 2020 Election," New York, November 13, 2020: https://nymag.com/intelligencer/amp/2020/11/david-shor-analysis-2020-election-autopsy-democrats-polls.html.

61   Megan Brenan, "Views of Big Tech Worsen; Public Wants More Regulation," Gallup, February 18, 2021: https://news.gallup.com/poll/329666/views-big-tech-worsen-public-wants-regulation.aspx.

62   Felix Salmon, "Media trust hits new low," Axios, January 21, 2021: https://www.axios.com/media-trust-crisis-2bf0ec1c-00c0-4901-9069-e26b21c283a9.html; Megan Brenan, "Americans Remain Distrustful of Mass Media," Gallup, September 30, 2020: https://news.gallup.com/poll/321116/americans-remain-distrustful-mass-media.aspx.

63   Kim Parker, "The Growing Partisan Divide in Views of Higher Education," Pew Research Center, January 30, 2019: https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2019/08/19/the-growing-partisan-divide-in-views-of-higher-education-2.

64   "Harvard Youth Poll," Harvard Kennedy School: Institute of Politics, April 23, 2021: https://iop.harvard.edu/youth-poll/spring-2021-harvard-youth-poll.

65   "February Verified Voter Omnibus – Party Concerns," Echelon Insights, February 12-18, 2021: https://echeloninsights.com/in-the-news/february-omnibus-party-concerns.

66   Jeremy Bauer-Wolf, "Idaho lawmakers cut $2.5M in funding for social justice education at 3 public universities," Higher Ed Dive, May 5, 2021: https://www.highereddive.com/news/idaho-lawmakers-cut-25m-in-funding-for-social-justice-education-at-3-publ/599613.

67   Emily Jacobs, "Florida's Gov. Ron DeSantis unveils new legislation to combat Big Tech," New York Post, February 16, 2021: https://nypost.com/2021/02/16/gov-ron-desantis-unveils-new-legislation-to-combat-big-tech.

68   Jonathan Swan and Alayna Treene, "Scoop: Trump's post-election execution list," Axios, October 25, 2020: https://www.axios.com/trump-firing-wray-haspel-esper-088cbd70-3524-4625-91f1-dbc985767c71.html.

69   United States, Executive Office of the President [Donald Trump]. Executive Order 13957: Creating Schedule F in the Excepted Service. October 21, 2020. Federal Register, vol. 85, no. 207, October 26, 2020, pp. 67631-67635, https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/10/26/2020-23780/creating-schedule-f-in-the-excepted-service.

70   "The 1619 Project," The New York Times Magazine: https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/1619-america-slavery.html.

71   "APP and SPRY Strategies Release Polling Results from Ten Battleground States," American Principles Project, July 22, 2020: https://americanprinciplesproject.org/elections/app-spry-strategies-release-polling-results-ten-battleground-states.

72   Thomas D. Klingenstein and Ryan P. Williams, "America is Not Racist," The American Mind, June 3, 2020: https://americanmind.org/salvo/america-is-not-racist.

73   Brooke Singman, "GOP senators propose replacing Columbus Day with Juneteenth as a federal holiday," Fox News, July 1, 2020: https://www.foxnews.com/politics/gop-senators-propose-replacing-columbus-day-with-juneteenth-as-a-federal-holiday.

ABOUT
American Principles Project

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Nowadays, everyone has a political arm or lobbyist to protect their interests. But the American family does not. Given the increasingly hostile progressive attacks on parents and children, the American family cannot afford to be without a political cavalry to defend it.

The American Principles Project wants to make the family the most powerful, well-represented special interest group in Washington, D.C. Existing pro-family groups largely focus their efforts on education and tracking legislation. That's great. But we need more. APP is the only national pro-family organization engaging directly in campaigns and elections.

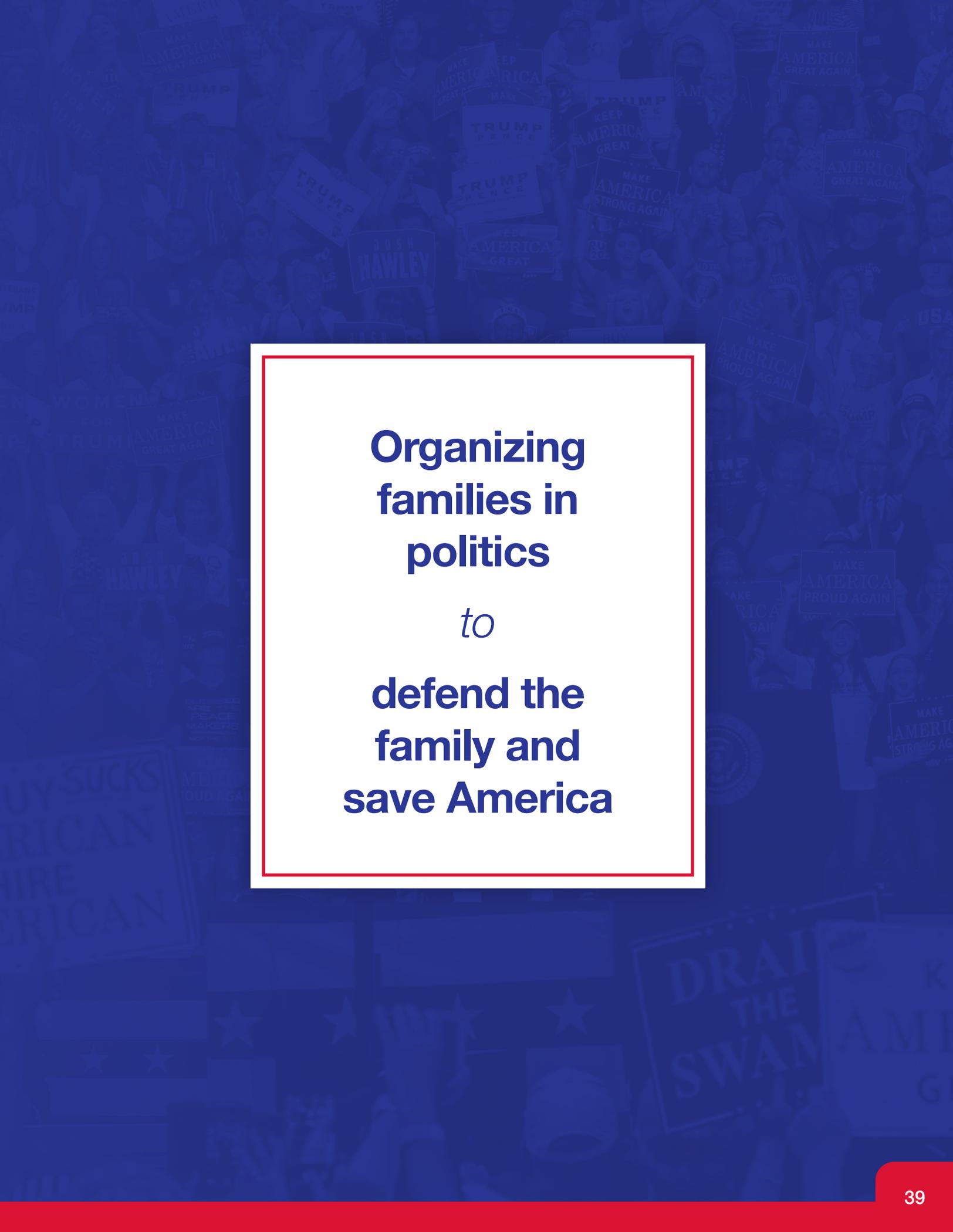The family has two natural advantages when it comes to politics:

★ When organized, families are numerous and more powerful than "any other special interest group."
★ Pro-family issues win elections.

But while hard-line progressive activists have grown comfortable attacking the family and making it difficult to raise children, pro-family political forces have largely been missing-in-action.

We want to impose a political cost on the Left's anti-family extremism.

If they want to attack parental rights, confuse young children about changing their gender, undermine the ability of parents to protect their children's innocence, or drive a wedge between parents and children in education, then they are going to be punished at the polls.

For more information about APP, including how to further support our work, visit our website at **www.AmericanPrinciplesProject.org**

Organizing families in politics

to

defend the family and save America

★ ★ AMERICAN
PRINCIPLES PROJECT

2800 Shirlington Road, Suite 1201
Arlington, VA 22206
202.503.2010
www.americanprinciplesproject.org