



AMERICAN PRINCIPLES PROJECT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

[MAGA After 2020: How the GOP Can Win Again and Save America](#)

[American Principles Project](#)

“[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.... 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 hostility he faced. 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.”

Part One: How We Got Here

“[T]he 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. [...]

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

- 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.
- 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.

Part Two: What Happened in 2020

“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.”

- Those trying to oust President Trump took extreme measures, using the coronavirus as a vehicle to fundamentally change the manner and process of America’s electoral system and instituting widespread censorship of information which went against the left-wing narrative.
- Nevertheless, Trump actually broadened the Republican base in 2020 by tying Democrats to their most unpopular positions: wokeism, and its related issues. He won more votes than any other Republican candidate in history and made significant inroads among working-class and minority voters.

Part Three: Winning Again in 2024 and Beyond

“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.”

- Secure our elections
- Rebuild the American family
- Fight woke-captured institutions
- Affirm America’s fundamental goodness

[Please find APP’s full report here.](#)

To schedule an engagement with [American Principles Project](#), please email pdupont@americanprinciplesproject.org.