

CONSERVATISM'S MOST IMPORTANT BATTLES

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Conservatism is defined as the practice of preserving what is established. In this country, what is established is a republic built on the premise that the best way to preserve liberty is to keep government limited. Has conservatism run out of gas? It had better not have—for that would mean our desire to defend our founding principles has run out of gas.

By its nature, many of the battlefields of the next decade for Conservatives will be to fight expansions of government chosen by our opponents.

Our opponents are the Left. They invariably want to expand government. While taking more of our money and regulating our lives and businesses is a loss of liberty in itself, the Left does seem to use the expansion of government to undermine self reliance, the importance of the family unit, and the values of our Judeo-Christian heritage.

By its nature, many of the battlefields of the next decade for conservatives will be to fight expansions of government chosen by our opponents. We will be on the defensive as the Left tries to expand government health care, create more subsidized trains and trolleys, and increases regulation (Global Warming, etc). The Democrats love to expand the roll of education—be it 3- or 4-year-olds being taken care of by the schools—or pushing more people to

go to the universities unnecessarily. Both initiatives result in more government jobs and allow left wing values to be instilled.

On which issues should we go on the offensive? First, Affirmative Action, or racial and gender preferences as we should refer to it. University admissions are the tip of the iceberg. They affect government set-asides for gov-

ernment contracts, hiring of government employees at all levels, and to a huge degree, the hiring, firing, and promotion of employees of businesses that contract with the government. Affirmative Action causes people to view elections as contests between ethnic groups rather than arguments over ideas. (Don't worry about what Republicans stand for on school choice, taxes, or crime—you must vote Democrat because of your race.) It is difficult or impossible to have a government based on elections when this mindset takes over (Iraq with the Shiites, Sunnis, and Kurds, or the tribal differences in African countries). The Left loves preferences because it causes even more people to feel dependent on the

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government (for jobs, contracts). With preferences also comes an Affirmative Action bureaucracy which is made up of bureaucrats whose goal is to tell “minorities” that America is a racist country, and they need this bureaucracy to get a job or a place in college.

Sadly, these bureaucrats have been very successful at spreading this message among our native-born Black population (not as successful with immigrants from Africa or the Caribbean.) We *must* stop these programs before this same mindset is drilled into the new Hispanic and Asian immigrants.

Fortunately, polls show the public is solidly behind Conservatives on this issue. The University of Wisconsin did a phone survey in 2000 showing the public opposes using race preferences at the University 84 to 10 percent. In a national survey in 2003, only 38 percent of minorities felt they should get a preference. Polls on preferences for jobs and government contracting would be similar. A constitutional referendum in Michigan to remove sex- and race-based preferences passed 59 to 41 percent despite being outspent overwhelmingly—and this in a state with a much higher minority population than Wisconsin. This issue attracts many voters who are not traditionally Republican. It affects the ability of your child or grandchild to get into college or to get a job, or how much we pay in taxes (government contracting). We must get rid of these preferences before our new immigrants buy into the evil philosophy behind them (which is the goal of the Left).

The second fight Conservatives should take on is related to the Left’s alliance with public employee unions. The Democrats are perceived to be the party which cares about our education. It is currently difficult and costly to fire a bad teacher. Cedarburg schools have paid over \$100,000 in attorney’s fees to try to fire a teacher who was viewing pornography on the internet and still has not succeeded. As a society, we

realize that any burger stand or car wash must be able to get rid of bad employees immediately (we can’t have dirty cars or overdone burgers), but we tolerate bad teachers for years. People of all political backgrounds do not want bad teachers for their children or grandchildren. This issue will put Conservatives on the offensive in the field of education again.

The third issue involves the Left’s love of social engineering. Wisconsin currently operates a program called the Family Planning Waiver. We give \$8 million per year (mostly federal money) to agencies (primarily Planned Parenthood, the state’s largest abortion provider) to give free contraceptives to any 15-, 16-, or 17-year-old girl in the state. Outreach is done in the schools to put as many girls in the program as possible. The girl’s parents cannot be notified. Conservatives are accused of imposing their values on others. This is clearly the case of the Left using your tax dollars to proselytize its values to your daughters and granddaughters without your knowledge. Their message and expectation is these girls will be sexually active at age 15. The Left loves this program in part because they dislike religious values and in part because it sends millions of dollars more to their allies. By fighting this program, Conservatives are with the vast majority in this state and will regain the initiative on social issues.

By tackling three issues in which the public will be overwhelmingly on our side, we will regain the public’s confidence and our own confidence. This will strengthen our position when we fight the Left on tougher issues. My only fear is that some Republicans will be afraid—they will worry about the 5 or 20 or 30 percent who will defend the status quo rather than the vast majority who will side with us. The Republicans lost the last election because of the war (not really a Conservative or liberal issue). We must pick new issues immediately to energize the public to our side. It is the only way to continue to preserve our founding principals.