

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION
FALK AUDITORIUM

WHY THE RIGHT WENT WRONG:
CONSERVATISM -- FROM GOLDWATER TO
THE TEA PARTY AND BEYOND

Washington, D.C.
Tuesday, February 16, 2016

PARTICIPANTS:

Discussants:

E.J. DIONNE, JR.
The W. Averell Harriman Chair, Senior Fellow, Governance Studies The Brookings Institution

BILL KRISTOL
Founder and Editor, The Weekly Standard

* * * * *

P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. DIONNE: I want to thank everyone for coming here today. I also want to thank Bill Kristol for taking time out from his work disrupting President Obama's right to appoint the next Supreme Court Justice of the United States. (Laughter) He literally came back from a meeting up on Capitol Hill, so I can't wait to see what Bill has cooked up for that.

I also want to say it was very kind of Bill to agree to create a publicity buzz around my book because he offered to come here to Brookings and renounce every view he has ever held on foreign policy. (Laughter) And my book itself might not get much publicity, but that certainly would.

No, but seriously, I am very grateful for Bill. If he doesn't do that, we will have a lively conversation today.

As you know, Bill is the editor of *The Weekly Standard* and this well-known conservative commentator. I always use this, so I have to use it again: Bill is the nicest and warmest person I know who also wants the United States to be at war with as many countries simultaneously as possible. (Laughter) But Bill was also actually among a significant group of conservatives who were helpful to me on this book. When I set out to write the book I went and interviewed a group of conservative members of Congress, former members of Congress, thinkers, strategists, columnists, who were really very helpful with their insights. And Bill, there were a couple of insights that Bill gave that were critical. And in summarizing, I'm going to just tick off a few of the core points of the book, let Bill respond devastatingly and then we will take it from there.

But when I was interviewing, I interviewed Bill at his Weekly Standard office and he was talking about how conservatives -- the problems with the Tea Party and at first he said that the conservatives really needed to make a distinction between the Reagan who got elected and the Reagan who governed. And then he corrected himself and said until the Tea Party can transition from being Goldwaterite to Reaganite, it has a big problem winning, and that was Bill. Fortunately for me, a lot of conservatives made many of the points I wanted to make for which I am very grateful. And that fit quite well with one of the central arguments of this book.

The first sentence of "Why the Right Went Wrong" -- I will interrupt myself to say I will be signing books outside. It makes an excellent gift for your conservative uncle you argue with or your

liberal aunt whose views you want to reinforce. (Laughter) But anyway, I'll be signing afterward. The first sentence of the book is, "The history of contemporary American conservatism is a story of disappointment and betrayal." And what I argue is that ever since Barry Goldwater's campaign in 1964, conservative politicians have had to make a series of promises that they couldn't possibly keep and that in making these promises they have created this cycle of disappointment and radicalization.

One conservative I probably surprised by quoting, I think on page 2 of the book, is Erick Erickson, the founder of the RedState blog, who said that the Republican Party created Donald Trump by making promises and not keeping them. And broadly, I agree with that, that Republicans promised to reduce the size of government. This was something that neither Richard Nixon nor Ronald Reagan nor either President Bush was able to do. Reagan, the great hero of American conservatism left the White House with government as almost exactly the same size of GDP as it was when he entered the White House, and obviously he left the White House with a very substantial deficit. These Republican presidents could not reduce the size of government because no matter what Americans may have said at a theoretical level about not liking government, they rather liked what government did.

Two classic students of American public opinion, Free and Cantril, wrote many years ago that Americans are ideological conservatives and operational liberals. They trash government in the abstract, want a lot from government in the concrete. The best example of that is how many members of the Tea Party support Medicare and Medicaid. Now, it is accidental, no doubt, that so many of the Tea Party's supporters are at or near the age of 65. But indeed, there was a great book on the Tea Party by Theda Skocpol and my colleague Vanessa Williamson, you know, pointed out that Tea Partiers said, well, these were earned benefits, these aren't welfare. Well, if you're not willing to cut the military or Medicare or Social Security or a number of other programs, you will not reduce government size as a share of our GDP.

The conservatives over a long period of time promised to reverse the cultural changes that took place during the 1960s. And obviously, we know that that was, on the whole, an unsuccessful effort. Again, I cite a very distinguished conservative named Bill Kristol whom I quoted. He said these are people who grew up voting for Reagan and winning twice and then Bush wins and feeling like the country was kind of moving in their direction, and then conservatives started losing elections.

And then Kristol goes on, "And they lose on certain cultural fights, marriage and others. They win mild victories in the Supreme Court, but ultimately *Roe v. Wade* is not getting overturned and the country's more secular. I don't know, why wouldn't they be unhappy with the way things are going? I mean, you can say they were optimists then and now they're pessimists, but that's just another way of saying they've lost a lot of fights. That's just objectively true, I think. Government hasn't been radically rolled back. The Reagan gains are pretty evanescent from a certain point of view."

Again, thank you, Bill, for underscoring this point in a very candid interview. And we can talk about the cultural changes, but I think that Bill pretty well said it there.

And then thirdly, in recent years there's been a great desire to roll back the ethnic makeup of the country to where we were in the 1950s and the 1960s. In some ways the real beef that opponents of immigration have is with the 1965 Immigration Act more than anything else, which changed the ethnic makeup of the country, the ethnic makeup of immigrants coming in. But, again, while Donald Trump promises to deport 11 million immigrants who came into the country illegally and build a wall that Mexico will pay for, I think most Americans outside of Trump's circle don't expect that to happen.

So there's been a lot of disappointment which has led to Donald Trump indeed and, to some degree, also, to Ted Cruz' candidacy. If you say the border is porous forever, but don't really do anything about it, people might suddenly turn to someone like Donald Trump. If you say that you are going to stop a lot of things from happening and they just keep happening, people will turn to the real thing.

One of the quotations that come to mind a lot since my book, since I finished the book, was John F. Kennedy's great line in his inaugural address, "He who foolishly rides to power on the back of the tiger usually ends up inside." And I think a lot of Republican leaders recently have ended up inside this tiger created by a resentment that they often spoke, but they just couldn't really answer.

The other thing that the Trump candidacy exposes, I think in a very important way -- and here is where Trump could actually end up being a useful figure in our politics, strange as it is for somebody like me to say that -- is that he's exposed the extent to which the Republican Party has relied on the votes of millions and millions of white working-class voters and delivered no material benefits to them or few material benefits to them. Again, in making this argument I don't just rely on my own view.

CONSERVATISM-2016/02/16

This is a view of some very prominent conservative thinkers. Ross Douthat, the columnist for the New York Times, and Reihan Salam wrote a very interesting book back in 2008 in which they warn the party that these voters, they called them, following Governor Tim Pawlenty, the party of Sam's Club, that these voters were going to get very impatient with this state of affairs. The party did not listen and now it has this rebellion on its hands.

So the book, I won't belabor my part of this. I'll let Bill come in and we'll interact a bit and then go to your questions or fervent and thoughtful comments. But I just want to close with two points.

First, the book is, in very large part, a book of history. I say this neither self-critically nor in self-praise, everything I touch doubles in length and turns to history because I find that in order to figure out how we got to here, you to figure out how we got to the spot before and the spot before that, and I ended up tracing it back to Goldwater. I could have, but then the book would have been outrageously long, traced it back to the opposition to Roosevelt in the '30s, where many of these conservative ideas came from. But a great scholar called Kim Phillips-Fein already wrote that book, so I cited Kim and moved forward from there.

But I think it's very instructive to look at the relationship of these presidencies to the conservative movement. I'll just talk about two real quickly.

One is Richard Nixon, who remains one of the most fascinating figures in American history. Some people have described Nixon, not unfairly, as the last liberal President because when you look at the one side of the Nixon ledger what you have is the opening to China, the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency, the creation of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the indexing of Social Security benefits. Even though Nixon played the southern strategy, Affirmative Action actually started under Richard Nixon. He tried to do briefly the Family Assistance Plan, which would have been a guaranteed national income. And that just scratches the surface.

Now, one way of looking at this is Nixon didn't care much about domestic policy. Signed a lot of bills Senate Democrats in Congress put before him and tended to foreign policy. But the others, to look at Richard Nixon's history and when he was first elected to Congress, as Chris Matthews pointed out in his lovely book about Kennedy and Nixon, Kennedy actually called himself a conservative in the 1946 congressional elections and Nixon actually called himself a liberal in the 1946 congressional

elections. Yet the Nixon we remember is the Nixon who played the Southern strategy, who ran against acid, amnesty, and abortion in the campaign against McGovern in 1972, and obviously was eventually impeached.

One of my favorite quotes I ran across was a conservative who was totally alienated from Nixon for his opening to China and all sorts of other policies, M. Stanton Evans, a famous conservative journalist and writer and organizer. And he said I only started liking Nixon with Watergate. (Laughter) His point being that only when Nixon got all these liberal enemies did he really love Richard Nixon.

And then the other figure I'll mention before I close is Ronald Reagan. And the first chapter in the book is called "The Ambiguous Hero." And the relevant quotation from a conservative there is a Charles Krauthammer quote, who looked at me and said, "You can choose your Reagan." And I begin that chapter by talking about how Chris McDaniel, the very right wing, kind of Neo-Confederate senatorial candidate in Mississippi in 2014, talked about how Reagan was his hero. And then Haley Barbour, the former governor of Mississippi, who organized the opposition to Chris McDaniel and helped defeat him, helped Thad Cochran, the incumbent, defeat him, also saw Reagan as a hero. And Haley Barbour's favorite quote about politics and perhaps life is, "Purity is the enemy of victory."

You couldn't have two more different Ronald Reagans and we can talk more about why that is, but Reagan, on the one hand, signed the biggest tax increase -- one of the biggest tax cuts in history, and then signed a whole series of tax increases. He compromised to save Social Security that he had once opposed when he was campaigning for Barry Goldwater. Coming to terms with who Reagan actually is I think is a fascinating task for both contemporary politics and historians.

So two closing points. One is that a hero in my book is Dwight D. Eisenhower. And I want to volunteer to write for The Weekly Standard on why conservatives should love Eisenhower. I argue that at the Goldwater moment, the Republicans and conservatives had a choice: there was a Goldwater conservatism and Bill Buckley conservatism. Buckley, of course, plays an important role in this book. Or there was Eisenhower conservatism.

Now, many conservatives now claim Ike wasn't even a conservative. I argue he was a really good Burkean conservative. And before Bill says it, I will, liberals have made a living for 75 years throwing Burke at conservatives and saying you should be more like him. I join in a long tradition that I

think began with Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. Nonetheless, I think he really was a Burkean conservative.

If you look at Ike's record, it was a conservatism of prudence and balance and it saw conservatism's main goal as preserving a way of life, the American way of life. He was fiscally prudent. He brought the United States to a very high level of influence in global affairs. He was a budget balancer. He was pro-business. He was sympathetic, very sympathetic, to religion even though in his early life he had had very little contact with religion. But he also accepted that certain changes become part of American life over time and that the New Deal changes responded to a need in the country.

And he was also willing to use government in constructive ways as other great Republicans, Abraham Lincoln and his hero Henry Clay in the Whig days, are willing to do to build the country. And so two great Eisenhower government initiatives, national initiatives, were the interstate highway system, which is the largest Public Works project in American history, I believe. And also, the Student Loan Program, that began with Eisenhower. It helped people like me go to college, which some may now regret, but I am grateful to Ike for doing that. (Laughter)

The last point I want to make is liberals have to care about the state of American conservatism even if conservatives may not want to listen to a liberal's advice to them. I write this book as somebody who has a lot of respect for the conservative tradition. I grew up in a conservative family. I became -- I remember, actually, as a 12-year-old conservative watching Ronald Reagan's great speech in 1964 that created his political career. And my dad and I looked at each other and said that's the guy who's going to save conservatism.

By the time I turned 13, I started having a problem with this whole conservative thing. And my dear, dear dad, I wrote a column on this once if you ever want to look it up, my dear dad actually encouraged argument. And when I started turning liberal, when I asked him for a subscription to The New Republic to strengthen my side of the argument, he gave it to me. And so we spent the next three years until my dad sadly died in 1968 arguing happily about politics. But I don't regard conservatives as some odd creatures to be studied by anthropologists alone because I literally can say I have loved conservatives all my life.

But secondly, I think that conservatism at its best is a check on certain progressive tendencies that need to be checked at times. Conservatives are right to tell us that tradition matters and

CONSERVATISM-2016/02/16

should not be overthrown lightly. Now, many bad things have been defended in the name of tradition, including slavery, and there are times when things that are defended in tradition's name do need to be overthrown. On the other hand, certain traditions, and I would include in that the tradition of self-government in our country that goes back to our founders, are traditions that we very much want to preserve.

I think that the family is a valuable institution. Now, as a liberal I don't view same-sex marriage as getting in the way of the family. I actually think the best argument for gay marriage is a conservative argument, which says that if we value fidelity and commitment, we want to encourage that for all our citizens. Nonetheless, we can argue about that. The family is an important institution, so conservatives remind us of that.

Conservatives remind us, also, that human nature is not infinitely plastic. You can't change human nature. And one of the great comments on this came from a liberal who actually got it from someone else. Reinhold Niebuhr wasn't a plagiarist, but it's long been associated with him, that original sin is the only empirically verifiable doctrine of the Christian church. Human beings are flawed and we have to accept that and work with that. That's another conservative insight.

But conservatism also has to change for the very reasons that Bill was up there plotting to block Obama from even naming a justice, which is that in a country with separated powers and often divided government, we cannot have a conservatism that has veered this far right and successfully govern ourselves. I am prepared to argue in the course of this that the polarization in our country is asymmetric and that conservatives have moved farther right than progressives or liberals have moved left. I think we need a more constructive kind of conservatism represented by Eisenhower.

I think conservatives need to love the country as it is a little more than they do. And if you read the last sentence of my book and ignored everything else, you would imagine that I am a conservative because I write that conservatives need to face our country's future with confidence and hope. I hope my book might encourage conservatives to feel more confidence and hope. I am not confident and hopeful that is the case, but perhaps at least Bill Kristol will and that others will join him. And I want to thank you all for coming today and thank you all very much. (Applause)

MR. KRISTOL: I feel I should live up to, you know, a certain image of conservatism by

beginning by attacking confidence and hope as overrated qualities. (Laughter) But I won't do that.

MR. DIONNE: I think I've heard you do that.

MR. KRISTOL: I have, yes. Yes, especially hope. (Laughter)

It's good to be here. It's good to be back at Brookings. E.J. and I edited a book together, which was kind of a rush thing after *Bush v. Gore*, which was called I think *Bush v. Gore*, and it was a collection of some of the court documents and then the best commentary on both sides of that case. And Brookings did a fantastic job in putting that out under a lot of time pressure, so I've always felt, among many other reasons that I respect Brookings, sort of personal gratitude to that.

And that was the book that was going to make us rich and we went on a book tour and it was actually quite -- people were very interested. One forgets now how big an issue *Bush v. Gore* remained into the spring and summer of 2001. And I remember we went to -- do you remember this? I think we were at the American Political Science Association for a panel, which is always on Labor Day weekend. I think it was in San Francisco for some reason, that's my memory. And it was mobbed. There were 400 people there or something like that. And everyone who was teaching common law to undergraduates or American politics was going to teach *Bush v. Gore*. And then we thought, oh, my god, we'll sell this book. It'll sell like one of, you know, Ted Lowi or Jim Wilson's textbooks or something. And then eight days later, 9-11 happened and *Bush v. Gore* seemed less important.

MR. DIONNE: Could I just say? I called Bill -- as any of you who read my column in those days knew I was very agitated about what happened in Florida. I wrote every column from the election to the court decision on Florida because I thought giving up even one column was folding to the efforts of Bush to shut down the count. But Brookings being a fair-minded place, I wanted to memorialize the argument and so we needed to do both sides. So I called Bill and I said, Bill, you can pick the wrongheaded stuff, I'll pick the right-minded stuff, and we'll put it all together in a book. (Laughter) And that's how it came to pass.

MR. KRISTOL: That's very good. It's a fair and balanced book to use a phrase. (Laughter) Did it already exist then? I guess it did. I guess it did sort of exist then.

I mean, it's a sad -- I was thinking about this, thinking about the *Bush v. Gore* book, that it's a sad commentary, I suppose, that in a way *Bush v. Gore* and the bitterness of that turned out to be a

CONSERVATISM-2016/02/16

better predictor or harbinger of what the next 15 years would look like than the unity that existed for a while after 9-11. And who knows, I'm sure there's blame on all sides for that and maybe not even blame, but just divisions in the country that were going to manifest themselves politically and have manifested themselves politically.

Anyway, but it's good to be here. It's good to be a prop on E.J.'s book tour. (Laughter) He writes like -- I feel like I do that every three months he's so prolific, you know. I know he'll do it for me, but I write one book every 20 years, if then, that you've edited usually, so it's not a fair exchange. But I'm happy --

MR. DIONNE: I volunteer.

MR. KRISTOL: Thank you, yeah. The class interest of authors overwhelms the slight ideological difference we have. This will be a true Marxist analysis of our common interests and encouraging the notion that people need to buy books for their conservative uncles and liberal aunts. Maybe I should sign the books for the conservative uncles. (Laughter) That would really horrify them. Actually I should sign the books for the liberal aunts. That would really be great. (Laughter)

Let me say three things about the book briefly. It's a good history. I mean, I think E.J. touched on that, but I found in reading it I was reminded of things I'd forgotten and learned some things I didn't know and had an angle on some things that I wouldn't have thought of, and I think that is very important. If you're interested in thinking about American politics, not just American conservatism really, because obviously to write about American conservatism you have to deal with American liberalism, as well, for the last really, what, 60 years or so, when the National Review was founded in 1955. I always think of that and I think E.J. takes that as kind of the founding moment. It's just worth reading because it stimulates thought, so I think that is important. There are a lot of intelligent books that aren't particularly useful in terms of the actual facts, the actual narrative, the actual history. This one is.

Second point, actually we don't disagree, of course, on everything. In fact, E.J. mentioned Ross Douthat and Reihan Salam's piece, for example, on Sam's Club Republicanism, which was intended to contrast obviously with Country Club Republicans. And that came out of an article in The Weekly Standard, the book did. The article I think was in 2005 maybe.

And certainly, the whole question of a conservatism that is less, I don't know,

CONSERVATISM-2016/02/16

dogmatically -- I'll put it this way, this is unfair, but I'll say less dogmatically Wall Street Journal-like or Mitt Romney-like, and I think this is more unfair to the Wall Street Journal than to Mitt Romney, but I'm using it as kind of a caricature and it's just assumption that, you know, the more free trade, the better; the more immigration, the better; the more, you know, policies that simply reward entrepreneurship, the better. You don't have to worry about actually thinking about the actual lives of working class and middle class Americans and how these policies affect them. You can just assume that every single government program should be voucherized and so forth. I mean, that is a certain kind of dogmatic conservatism that I think The Weekly Standard has always leaned against, though, in many case, it's also right. The G.I. Bill or the Student Loan Program are both classic -- are structured in a conservative way, I would point out: not much government bureaucracy and obviously you can take it to any college you want, religious or secular, liberal or conservative, two-year, four-year, et cetera.

So I'm generally sympathetic obviously to these more or less conservative arguments about how public policies are best structured, but I do think there's been a kind of dogmatism on the right and obviously on the left that occasionally overtakes common sense or just empirical reality. Plus, these policies have to be tailored to the actual country you live in and you're not inventing a new country. And too many conservatives have fallen into the trap that I would say the left really fell into in the '60s and '70s, which is, you know, a think tank has done a huge amount of work and produced research satisfactory to the researchers and maybe to even fair-minded readers that X policy would optimize for the following things that we care about. And, therefore, they just get very frustrated and can't understand why the public isn't just signing on to X policy. Those of us who believe strongly in much greater educational choice have gone through these stages of frustration.

And usually when things don't -- when the public doesn't sign on, A, one should be suspicious of a think tank -- and with all due respect to Brookings, but Brookings is less this way actually than many think tanks -- you know, schemes cooked up in think tanks; suspicious on conservative grounds, on Hayekian grounds, about whether these models really work, about whether one can really plan and figure out everything; suspicious on grounds about anticipated consequences and so forth that the early neoconservatives called so much attention to, my father and James Q. Wilson and people like that, some people at Brookings. So I'm against the kind of -- there's been too much of a kind of

CONSERVATISM-2016/02/16

conservative utopianism, I'd say, which has been partly in reaction to and partly comes from the same intellectual currents that a kind of liberal utopianism that believed in planning and sort of remaking society according to certain patterns and getting rid of all the historical, you know, complications of things. And there's been too much of that on the right. So in that respect, I think we might agree.

And I do very much think in particular on this kind of issue of the working class and middle class not benefiting in the last 20, 30, maybe 40 years in the way the macro statistics would suggest the country has benefited, whether it's from globalization or trade or immigration, being furious about that, which doesn't mean one should be against globalization or trade or immigration. Being serious about the phenomenon is very important. And I think in this course of this book you get lots of instances of conservatives not being serious and some instances of conservatives being serious. E.J. doesn't address the liberals as much, so you don't see how much liberal un-seriousness there's been over the years, I would say, but nonetheless it's important and useful, I think.

This book does a good job of capturing, I think, the complexity, the kind of granularity of American politics, and also the contingency I do think. You know, people have such a tendency these days to over-interpret things to some degree. You know, one guy, take Trump, maybe he's a big deal, maybe it's a huge phenomenon, maybe it's also just an accident of a bunch of things, of he's a very good demagogue, the other politicians who were running weren't that good. There was such a reaction to Bush. There was reaction to the idea of Bush-Clinton. There was a reaction to Obama on the right. All kinds of other things happened and Trump has hit a nerve as Ron Paul did and as Buchanan did and as others did.

And it doesn't mean that the fundamental shape of American politics or American conservatism has changed, or maybe not. Maybe there really is -- there certainly is something deeper there, but one can sometimes over-interpret that. I think E.J. does a good job of balancing, what should we call it, like the contingency in history and in politics with the underlying forces that do sometimes make such a big difference.

I would make one point about the -- E.J. read the first sentence, so I'll read it, too, and read the subsequent sentences. Look, I'll put it this way as a kind of question really. "The history of contemporary American conservatism is a story of disappointment and betrayal." But that's also true in

CONSERVATISM-2016/02/16

some ways to the history of contemporary liberalism obviously, as Bernie Sanders will be the first to tell you and Bernie Sanders is getting even more votes on the Democratic side so far than Donald Trump is on the Republican side.

“For half a century, conservative politicians have made promises to their supporters that they could not keep.” That reminds me a little bit of the current President.

“They subscribe to a small government utopia” -- no, it’s the conservative mistake; the liberal mistake is, I don’t know what you want to call it, a social planning utopia, transforming America utopia -- “that was impractical and politically unsustainable because it required wrenching changes to government that most Americans didn’t want, the announced decades of change, et cetera. It proved to be far beyond the capacity of politics.”

I’m not making, you know, a gotcha point here. I mean, I think it’s a fact that, in general, politicians disappointment citizens with their promises. Maybe there’s something about the modern world on both sides that makes politics especially likely to fail or not to succeed as much as it could. Maybe there’s something about our culture, our intellectual life, the Internet, you name it, that makes us not grateful when things do partly succeed and focus entirely on the glass half-empty side of things. Because if you step back and came down from 30,000 feet, it’s not as if the country’s entirely a failure, you know. But if you listen to the rhetoric in both parties, you’d think that America’s succeeded in nothing in the last 30 or 40 years. Everyone here is -- you know, we’re in the middle of a combination of a Great Depression and, what, I don’t know, every other seriously bad thing that’s ever happened and people are being persecuted right and left and no one is making a living and no kid has a chance anymore and the whole world is falling apart.

If you came down from Mars and looked at the last 25 years, first you’d say we did have a peaceful success in winning the Cold War and the world is a lot wealthier than it was 30 years ago. And the things that are making our life more difficult, China and India, for example, coming into the global economy, is a fantastically good thing from the point of view of hundreds of millions of people who they count, too, you know, who live in China and India. And that America’s role in preserving the fundamental world order, fundamentally free trade and free movement of capital across borders has not been trivial in that. I mean, when we’re past all the politics, 100 years from now people are going to say that was a

pretty impressive achievement by America from '45 to 2015.

So I think maybe our culture just rewards the sort of seeing the flaws and the limitations and the failures much more than the relative successes. And, of course, one conservative lesson is that politics always fails.

Who was it who said it? Was it every political life ends in failure? I can't remember that. It's some British politician, I think. But every political movement, in some respect, also -- not every movement ends in failure, I guess you'd say. There were a few that really do succeed, but they always end up frustrated and the world doesn't quite change as much as they would have hoped.

So that's not a polemical point really. I just think it's worth when one starts talking about movements succeeding or failing, it's more of a mixed bag in both cases than perhaps in the heat of the struggle we think or when partisans on either side who really did have hopes that fundamentally Goldwater and Reagan would transform this massive country that has huge investments in a million different programs and policies and institutions, just as they weren't going to transform it that much anymore than President Obama and a Democratic Congress were going to transform it for two years. At least we're going to transform it that much.

Are you eager?

MR. DIONNE: No, no.

MR. KRISTOL: Okay. Well, I just think that's a general point to keep in mind. One has to have realistic expectations for politics and that would be true of conservatism.

Now, I think conservatism did get infected by a little bit of utopianism. I don't think that's anything new. What movement hasn't over the centuries? But on the whole it has kept it in check. And maybe with Trump we're seeing a real kind of frustration and exasperation, some of it legitimate, with conservative and Republican elites or elites of all kinds, political and economic elites. Some of it legitimate. I've defended a lot of it.

I spent a couple of weeks at the beginning of the Trump phenomenon being anti-Trump, of course. I said he can't be president, no one should vote for him. But a little bit anti-anti-Trump, also, in the sense of I disliked the contempt with which elites here in Washington and New York looked at all the concerns of Trump's supporters. I'd say now I just so loathe Trump that it's overcome my -- I've put aside

my anti-anti-Trump side for a while here because I think it's important to defeat Trump in the Republican primaries.

MR. DIONNE: Especially now that Trump has broken with Bill's foreign policy definitively.

MR. KRISTOL: Yeah, Trump is now way to the left actually of any Democrat who's ever run for President in terms of claiming that Bush knowingly lied about WMDs, which is not something I believe that President Obama ever said or Hillary Clinton or Bernie Sanders. But I think it's just a sign of the general irresponsibility of the Trump campaign and it worries me as a conservative.

I would have said a year ago, I mean, here's a great -- but back up. I would have said a year ago, you know, in a certain way it's not a movement that's obviously failed. Republicans are governing more states than ever before. They had just won control of both Houses of Congress. There are a lot of impressive young Republicans, many of whom have challenged the status quo. The party had shown a pretty good ability, as the Democrats did with Barack Obama, to absorb a kind of dissident movement. In the case of Obama, he just took it over and won the nomination of the presidency. In the case of the Tea Party types it was more individual races. It was Marco Rubio in Florida or Ted Cruz in Texas and others, but there were a lot of bright, young conservatives showing up in Washington and in state capitals.

The Republican Party in Congress is much younger in both the House and the Senate than the Democratic Party. If you look at the young Republican class, in my opinion, of 2014 in the Senate, the ones who were elected, it's one of the most impressive bunches of young senators that we've seen, mostly extremely well-educated, if you care about that, at elite institutions.

Like (inaudible) talked at Harvard shortly after the 2014 election and said, well, I'm sure you'll be having a huge number of events here at the Kennedy School because an amazing number of the people just elected are Harvard graduates. Some of them are double Harvard graduates, like Tom Cotton is Harvard and Harvard Law; I think Danny Sullivan from Alaska is Harvard and Harvard Law; one or two of the others. Mike Pompeo is West Point and Harvard Law. Elise Stefanik, who is the youngest woman ever elected to Congress, is a Harvard grad. I mean, Harvard grad, we're Harvard grads, you know, I am, so I have a slight interest in this and I was speaking at Harvard. I don't think it necessarily makes them any better or worse, needless to say, probably worse, than anyone else.

But, of course, if these had been liberals and Democrats they would have been -- you couldn't have walked by the Kennedy School, you know, any day without there being a special panel featuring these wonderful products of Harvard. As it was, my impression is they've almost never been invited there and, you know, Harvard is busy having panels with Barney Frank or someone who retired from the Congress, who's a fine fellow, but still, who fits into their ideological mode.

But I would have said Republicans are doing pretty well. The conservative movement has adjusted to the times. There are a ton of interesting young people running for President, some of them will do well, some of them won't, but there are some impressive young governors, including governors of purple states and even blue states, like Christie or Walker; Jeb Bush, one of the more successful governors of the last decade. You've got young senators running. You've got a diversity of views, kind of healthy debate within the party.

And I think I wasn't wrong. I mean, that was more or less a true analytical statement, they controlled, you know -- but Trump has, of course, proven the limitations perhaps of that optimism. We'll see, you know. It'll be very interesting actually whether -- I think it's not trivial at all whether Trump ends up being a 25 percent candidate, 30 percent candidate maybe, who loses. And it's one of a very recognizable pattern of such candidates in American history on both sides. Or whether he wins or loses with sufficient votes to really change the nature of the party, and we really don't know that now. We don't know, of course, what will happen on the Democratic side either.

So my only caution would be I think this is a well-timed book, you know "Where the Right Went Wrong" with the Trump phenomenon. I don't know -- I mean, I give you credit for thinking about it two or three years ago when I think it was less obvious that things from a conservative point of view certainly had gone wrong. And I still am wary of, therefore, over-interpreting things.

You know, it's the same country it was a year ago. And a year ago there was no Donald Trump and, I don't know, there's a rebellion in the House Republican Caucus against John Boehner, one that I think was understandable. And people can mock it if they want, but who ends up as Speaker of the House? Paul Ryan. You know, that doesn't strike me as a party that's gone off the rails, has no impressive people in it, is a bunch of sclerotic, angry 72-year-olds, or something like that. So, you know, these things are -- one can over-interpret and over-predict. But I give E.J. credit for writing the book and

then I think the Trump phenomenon certainly helps his case that something went wrong.

The final point, though, I would say is when you read the book it's not clear that anything went wrong. I mean, as E.J. just said, he doesn't like in a sense the attitude of the conservative movement from Goldwater on. He's an Eisenhower Republican. So it didn't really go wrong, I don't think. It just has been not kind of the Buckley-Goldwater-Reagan conservative movement, which has always been the heart of it. There were neoconservatives, there were many other people. They never controlled, they totally dominated the Republican Party, but they were always an increasing part of it. They were there from the beginning, so it's not clear to me what's exactly changed.

If anything, I'd say the movement is much less dogmatic that it was under Goldwater or Reagan's '64 speech supporting Goldwater. Like E.J., we're almost the same age. E.J.'s story of watching the Reagan speech in his home with I guess your father sort of being supportive of it and excited about it, I don't really remember it. I remember my father's general attitude, my parents' general attitude, towards the Goldwater campaign, which was that it was kind of nutty and it was going to, of course, deservedly lose very badly. And I don't know that he even bothered to watch the speech of this B-list actor who was giving a hopeless speech on behalf of a hopeless campaign in October of '64. So we had opposite experiences there when we were 12 years old, I guess.

I would say this, though. Bill Buckley, you know, famously said or wrote in the opening mission statement of National Review, "We stand athwart history yelling stop." And a lot of people, me included, have over the years said, well, that, of course, really can't be what conservatism ultimately is about. It has to have a positive agenda. It has to have a reform agenda. We have to accommodate. We can't just be against history. That's crazy. You know, history is not going to stop, et cetera, et cetera.

But I admire Buckley for that and I've grown to admire him more over the years for that because it is just too easy in the modern world to go along with things that people tell you are in accord with the arc of history or in accord with progress. And the more I've gone back and looked at those early conservatives, I mean, they were wrong about a whole bunch of issues, some of the people around Buckley were crazy. Bill himself changed over the years.

But the notion that there is a political movement that is willing to say I'm sorry, this is what we think is right and we're going to fight for it and we may lose. And Bill Buckley knew -- I don't know if

CONSERVATISM-2016/02/16

he really knew, I imagine he knew Goldwater was going to lose. I think probably anyone would have lost that year, but he knew he was going to lose when he ran for mayor of New York. But there's something impressive about such a movement as there is, I will be fair, as there is something impressive about Bernie Sanders. I have a sneaking admiration. I probably shouldn't say this, you know. Maybe this will damage him in the Democratic primaries or something, but I admire Sanders. (Laughter)

MR. DIONNE: I see the Clinton campaign's next Tweet. (Laughter)

MR. KRISTOL: No, I mean, he's a Socialist. Socialism collapses everywhere in Europe, that fails. And Democratic Socialism more or less, I would argue, fails and has to be fixed. And even the Scandinavian countries that he talks about so much actually go at a much more or less call it a neoconservative direction in fixing their social welfare programs in the '90s. The part of the left that succeeds is identify politics really and the cultural stuff, where clearly the left has won huge victories, for better or worse, for the country over the last 30, 40, 50 years.

The part, if you take E.J.'s first paragraph there that I read, where liberals are right to be frustrated about the failure to make much in the way of change, and, of course, this is what Sanders says all the time, is on the economic side, where we have more -- you know, we've had Clinton for eight years and Obama for eight years and more inequality apparently than we've had since, you know, the Gilded Age and hedge fund managers and the real difficulties among the working class, despite well-intentioned efforts to help them in both parties.

But your thinking cyclically for the economic liberal agenda has been as much as a failure as the conservative cultural agenda. And it's not accident in a way, therefore, that each party has thrown up Sanders who represents the part of the liberal dream or the dream on the left that has not been able to be advanced much at all, I would say. And Trump represents -- I don't even know what Trump represents because he's not even a cultural conservative, but he represents the frustrations, let's say, about the country on the right that aren't strictly economic, I wouldn't say, since he doesn't have much of an economic agenda, Trump, so far as one can tell.

So anyway, I think that's -- but one can try to accommodate to Trump, we can try to accommodate on the left to whatever's trendy. But I admire American conservatism for actually having a certain groundedness in principle and an unwillingness to simply go along.

And I think it was very important what Buckley did. I mean, Milton Friedman, when we went to college, that was just fringe stuff, you know, and the fact that Friedman was willing to sort of make his case and train a ton of students and let empirical work be done that either would or wouldn't verify his general arguments. And there are a million, obviously, strains of free market conservatism and that kind of free market economics. But I do think that that spirit of not simply going along and getting along, if I can put it this way, of not being intellectually an Eisenhower Republican, maybe in the real world of politics the best you do is elect Eisenhower, who was an impressive man obviously, if not a very strong conservative. But in the world of intellect you really want to stand by your principles and make your case because you don't know how things will change.

And Scalia is a perfect example. Originalism, when Scalia and Bork started arguing, that was so out of fashion and so out of touch. And now it's at least a competitive view in serious law schools and among law professors and judges as to how one should think about a constitutional order. So I am a defender in that respect of the modern American conservative movement, precisely because it hasn't been quite as flexible or forward-looking or adjusting to history as some people might like.

MR. DIONNE: Thank you. I'm just going to make a few comments because I'd like to open it up for our conversation. I was worried at the beginning, Bill was so nice to the book I thought no one's going to trust this book on my side if he says too many nice things. But I was particularly -- two things I do want to, one, say thank you for, which is the history, where I do try to tell the history straight. I don't see any point in making an argument that tries to twist the history, and I don't think I do that. And my opinion's very clear when I express it.

And the second thing is I was glad to hear Bill talk about the country being in good shape. And I do think one of my sharpest criticisms of conservatism as it's existed in the Obama years is a refusal to accept that our country actually fared quite well relative to other countries at the end of the crash, that the combination of Obama's policies and the Fed's policies actually steered us out of a catastrophe better than austerity policies supported by more conservative governments elsewhere. And this notion that this very energetic, entrepreneurial, adventurous country was somehow going to hell in a hand basket, which is so popular on the right at this point, just strikes me as utterly out of keeping with the country we live in.

Now, there are real problems in the country. And as somebody on the left of Social Democratic inclinations, obviously the rising inequality, the problem with wages, the stagnation of wages is something that bothers me very much. And I do think if we don't fix that, we're going to have some real long-term problems. But we do have the wherewithal as a country to fix that.

And I think it's something conservatives -- you know, a fair number of establishment conservatives, including magazine editors and the like, have a lot to answer for because of the weird nature of charges against Obama and things said about Obama in recent years that just weren't true. You know, the Obama is a Muslim. First, as if there's something wrong with a Muslim American getting elected President, but -- or he studied in a madrassa. All these kinds of things I write in the book about how I do not think responsible Republicans push back against this enough.

I quote John Boehner on "Meet the Press" because he said, well, people are entitled to their own opinion even though I don't fully share it. I mean, that stuff I think is very destructive and it's destructive to the body politic.

But it is at least good -- I treasure any optimism I hear from conservatives these days. And it's very strange that the Republican hat-- the answer to the Trump "Make America Great Again" hat is a new Democratic hat that says, "America is Already Great," a hat I could imagine Bill Kristol wearing most of his life. And it's just very odd that this reversal has happened.

The other thing I want to answer, and then if it's okay with you, Bill, I'll go to the audience and you can --

MR. KRISTOL: Sure.

MR. DIONNE: You know, Bill raised a fair point that I have heard from a number of conservatives, which is that if conservatism is in such terrible shape, why do they control so many congressional seats, Senate seats, governorships, legislative seats? And I deal with that directly in the book because it's a brute fact. And what I argue is that, paradoxically, what has created this moment for conservatives in midterm elections is the very thing that will create great problems for conservatism and Republicans in the long run, which is that conservatives now are very old. And I hate to say this, but the people who will shape the future are not old people, they are younger people. And it is conservatism's weakness with the young that paradoxically creates their strength in midterm elections and liberalism's

and the Democrats' strength with the young that creates their problem in midterm elections. And this is a real change.

You know, we remember the Michael J. Fox character on "Family Ties" when Reagan was president conservatism was young. And according to Pew, in 1987, only 39 percent of self-described conservatives were over 50. In 2014, 53 percent were. I suspect that number's probably up to 54 or 55 percent.

And obviously, also, the progressive movement of the Democratic Party are very diverse and the conservative movement is increasingly a movement of older, white Americans who do not represent that diversity, which I think as the autopsy that the Republican Party conducted of itself after the last election and then put on a shelf as if it had to do with some other party in another country, you know, that this attitude toward minorities, toward Hispanics, toward Muslims, toward the young, toward African Americans was going to create real long-term problems with the party. Only once in the last six elections have the Republicans won a majority of the popular vote and that was Bush, who actually did so in part because he got somewhere around or over 40 percent of the Latino vote.

And a Republican Party that does not respond to its weakness among the young or non-white Americans is going to end up where the Republican Party in California is today. And I quote Jim Brulte, the Republican state chair in California, who said, you know, this was Ronald Reagan's state. This is a state where, in some ways, modern conservatism got traction. And now it is one of the most Democratic states in the union. And Brulte, the Republican chair, is trying to fight back and he says to the national party look at us before you go down some of these paths.

So I think that the Republican strength at the local level is real. Obviously, I can talk about gerrymandering, which is also real, but the gerrymandering itself was made possible by the outcome of the 2010 election.

I think Democrats and progressives do have a turnout problem that they've got to deal with among young people. They're fighting something that's hard to fight. Young people have always under-voted in midterm elections. Registration is harder for the young. Young people move around more than older people do.

But a last point and then we'll go to the audience, there's a very disconcerting thing, as

CONSERVATISM-2016/02/16

Janet Hook of the *Wall Street Journal* put it in the *Wall Street Journal* today, it's disconcerting in the short term for Hillary Clinton, but in the long term for Republicans. It's a little chart about the young people coming out in droves in the Democratic primary contests so far -- admittedly, we have two -- and they are coming out overwhelmingly in the Democratic primary, not the Republican primary. And I think unless the Republicans find a way to fire the imaginations of the young again, what I write about them in this book is true. And I do not think what is happening so far in this campaign will do anything to right that.

MR. KRISTOL: Let me just say one word about that. Well, look, I couldn't agree more. You've got to -- Republicans were not doing well with young voters before Reagan. On the other hand, these things can change very abruptly. If you nominate George H.W. Bush and Bob Dole, then you have a son of Bush for two terms, which was where Republicans were actually younger -- I guess Bush and Gore are the same age and then Bush is younger than Kerry -- they did a little better with younger voters. And then you nominate McCain and Romney against Barack Obama, I think in presidential elections you're going to lose a lot of young voters. Some of that is ideological, but some of that is also just who's running and what generation they're from.

And I'm happy to match up a Rubio-Cotton or Cruz-Rubio ticket with a Hillary and whoever. I guess she'll have to -- you know, Hillary-Sanders would be great, but the entire ticket would be on Social Security. (Laughter) But, I mean, liberals are very unselfconscious about the fact that they are literally running -- the two people for president who are now running, who would be among the oldest ever nominated or elected President. And who else could have run, incidentally? Joe Biden, John Kerry, Al Gore, and Elizabeth Warren. I'd say those were the top four other candidates.

Now, of course, they have some attractive younger candidates, but they have blocked them. And I think you could pay a price for that because politics isn't always about huge movements. It is partly and it's partly about some issues, like the same-sex marriage, though that's now probably off the table. But it's also about individuals, as we learned from Reagan. Now, Reagan proves that an older candidate can appeal to young voters and Sanders might prove the same thing. But I'll take my -- I will honestly, if we have -- I will take my bets on young voters going forward if we get to have Rubio and the Democrats get to have Sanders and we have a serious debate about which policies are best for young people going forward. So a lot depends on who's nominated and a lot depends on a lot of other

contingent things.

The youth, that's the key vote to change. But the good thing about young voters is they haven't voted that often and they are susceptible to change. As I always say when I speak on college campuses, it'd be a terrible thing if you -- it's not bad to make a mistake once or twice voting when you're 19 years old and then 23, even three times maybe when you're 27. It'd be terrible to go through life making the same mistake over and over and over again. (Laughter)

So you guys, I say on campuses, will have the great pleasure of at some point learning something, growing up, educated, getting better educated, and realizing, gee, I may have cast a couple of foolish votes when I'm young, but now I've learned something, just as those Reagan voters who had voted Democratic obviously in the '40s and '50s and '60s and '70s were able to change. But that's, I mean, who knows?

MR. DIONNE: And, of course, it is that condescending attitude toward the progressive young that I am counting on to prove the theory of this book right. (Laughter)

MR. KRISTOL: I don't have a -- well, this is a longer debate. I'm very -- honestly, who knows? I mean, we all deal with the young people we know and we obviously know very self-selected types who come to our talks and come to work at our magazines or at our enterprises of different kinds.

I don't feel -- I mean, I do think it's been a problem on some of the cultural issues. I don't feel that this conservative movement is old or backward-looking. I mean, I think if you look at the younger members of Congress, if anything they don't know enough about the history of conservatism. The problem isn't that they're stuck in the past, I think.

MR. DIONNE: Let's start with my friend up here. We've got some mics floating around. And then over there and then we'll work it -- go ahead.

MR. MITCHELL: Thanks very much to both of you. I'm Garrett Mitchell and I write *The Mitchell Report*. And I want to put a question to Bill and say that I share E.J.'s I think deep concern about the state of the conservative movement and/or Republican Party and it's sort of hard to know which is which, but for reasons that we haven't necessarily talked about, and so I want to give you two or three examples and just get your response to it.

I sat at a session at AEI some time ago with this very bright young guy named Tom

CONSERVATISM-2016/02/16

Cotton, who's got a wonderful resume, whose remarks that day were entirely disparaging and in a very, very unattractive way about President Obama. That fellow went on to I think lead an activity in the Senate that is -- I don't know if it's inexcusable, but it certainly was stupid and I think inexcusable. I'm talking about the letter to the Iranians from the Senate, which was a Tom Cotton effort.

I thought that --

MR. DIONNE: I think Bill wrote the letter. (Laughter)

MR. MITCHELL: I thought that Boehner's invitation to Netanyahu and going around Obama was -- you know, it's beyond Roberts Rules of Order or Emily Post. It's a fundamental disrespect that I see in the people that get some attention. And it is -- of course, you know, there's not much more to say about Cruz. As Donald Trump likes to say there isn't a person in the United States Senate that wants Ted Cruz to be the President of the United States and probably doesn't want him to be in the Senate.

There is, I'll call it behavioral, but it's larger than that, there is a behavioral characteristic of the people that I see on the Republican/conservative side of the equation who seem to get -- and that now includes Trump, and that's the part that concerns me as much as anything and less about positions on trade or whatever. So I'm just curious whether you think someone like myself is seeing things the wrong way or whether you think that the sort of Cotton, Cruz, et cetera, inviting Netanyahu thing is just fair game.

MR. KRISTOL: Yes, I think each of those is a perfectly defensible act. I don't want to go into the details of them, but I think I'm happy to defend each of them. I very much like Tom Cotton. I respected John Boehner as Speaker. And I actually am much less hostile to Ted Cruz than all those senators.

I mean, if liberals want to take the position that if your fellow senators don't like you and if you've disrupted things too much, woo, watch out, they can go ahead and take that position.

MR. MITCHELL: That's not the point.

MR. KRISTOL: Well, okay.

MR. MITCHELL: That's not the point.

MR. KRISTOL: Well, you said he's disliked by every senator, so I'm simply saying. Now, maybe, look, I have some issues with Ted Cruz. I don't think I'm going to vote for him in Virginia on

March 1st. Probably, but I also think he's well within the traditional spectrum. He's much more within the traditional spectrum as a matter of ideology, I would say, than Bernie Sanders, but Democrats are entitled to think about Bernie Sanders as President and Republicans are entitled to think about Cruz as President.

Trump is upsetting to me because he isn't a conservative. I'd say if you had no Trump in the race it's a totally traditional Republican race: very conservative Ted Cruz, pretty conservative Marco Rubio, more pragmatic Governor John Kasich, Bush kind of a different era Republican. We've had races like this on the Republican side actually almost every 4 years for the last 20, 30, 40 years.

Trump is the wild card. And for me, one thing that's so upsetting to Trump is he precisely doesn't have any of the normal checks and guidance provided by the conservative movement. He is someone who has been not a conservative, not a Republican. He's a total operator. He's a total demagogue. And I am worried and upset that as so many Republican primary voters so far -- we'll see how many they end up being -- are frustrated enough and are willing to toy with voting for him. I'm unhappy that Cruz has gone along with him for those months. For me, that's the most serious criticism of Cruz.

But, no, I don't agree with this notion that the Republicans have wildly changed the rules. I think politics has gotten much more polarized. It's gotten polarized on both sides. For every instance one can cite Republicans doing things that maybe they wouldn't have done 10 or 20 years ago, I could certainly cite instances of Democrats doing things that they wouldn't have done 10 or 20 years ago, going back to the Petraeus hearing on September 11, 2007, which happens to be fresh in my mind because I did a conversation that you can watch it online with Petraeus. Not about that, but about how he actually ran the surge in Iraq. Going back to some of the things President Obama's done, Executive Orders that he himself and his own administration sort of agreed were outside the bounds of what the law permitted just a year before he issued them. So one could argue this both ways.

I honestly think it is a more polarized politics. I don't like it. I don't think anyone intended it particularly. It's a product of a lot of different sociological forces and some accidental forces, including a Bush-Gore election probably in retrospect that was even. But, no, I don't accept the characterization.

MR. DIONNE: Just real quickly, I obviously have much more sympathy for your characterization. And I would make a case that you can probably -- now, everybody when they argue this

CONSERVATISM-2016/02/16

goes back to their own favorite point. Conservatives always love to go back to Bork, then liberals take it back to Abe Fortas. But I do think something broke in the '90s. And I think that, as I argue in the book, the parties became much more ideologically pure in the 1994 election. And I show the data of how until '94 there were quite a few Republicans still voting for Democrats for the House. In a lot of cases they were Southerners. By '94, congressional voting and presidential voting were almost entirely in line. Now they are completely in line.

But I also cite figures showing that the Republican Party has moved more to the right and I think has been willing, to put it charitably, push the envelope on a lot of these things. I think impeachment, after the country had rejected it, in effect, in a congressional election that was run on impeachment and it was only one of a couple of few times that the party in the White House gained seats in the sixth term, yet they pushed on anyway. *Bush v. Gore*, which I could argue about all day and we spent months arguing about it, I think pushed things farther, and so on.

And if you look at who Republicans and who Democrats are there are many more moderates and conservatives left in the Democratic Party than there are liberals or moderates left in the Republican Party. So I'm sympathetic to what you're saying.

We could argue this back and forth, but I do think there is something that's happened that the Republicans have pushed beyond on some of the norms and I think we see it here. And I talk about that in some of the book.

We can talk after, if you could. Let me -- thank you for the question.

DR. POPLIN: I'm Dr. Caroline Poplin. I'm a physician. My question is about corporate money. Do you talk about that in the book?

Yes, there are some on our side. We have Soros and that guy up in the northwest, but they have a lot more. And Jane Mayer has written a book that explains how deep and how long and how much has been going on. And the interests of the corporate donors, the Koch brothers, are not necessarily the same as the interests of ordinary people in the party.

MR. DIONNE: Thank you. I write quite a bit about that, although -- in fact, I specifically cite Jane's work. And I knew Jane was working on that other book, so I decided I could write a quarter as much as Jane did about the money and then have a totally inadequate book or I could cite Jane and talk

about it analytically, which is what I did.

David Frum, the dissident conservative, has talked about the role of the radical rich in our politics. And there's a chapter in the book called "The New, New Old Right," where I argue that, on the one hand, many of the ideas that are present on the right now go back a long way, including in the case of the Tea Party a lot of Birch Society ideas. And that when you go back to Glenn Beck's show, a lot of those books he was peddling were old John Birch Society books. Bill Buckley had tried to weed the Birchers out of the movement, but these ideas came back.

And so what you have within the party and with the movement is a kind of loss of control over the party's agenda to the money interests and the radical rich on the one side and also, again to use a Frum term, the conservative entertainment complex, you know, Bill's old network at Fox News combined with the talk show hosts. And I show how liberal and conservative media habits are quite different. Liberals, you know, perhaps because they feel comfortable with the rest of the media, scatter their interests and trust across a pretty broad spectrum. Conservatives, perhaps because they mistrust the rest of the media, are very loyal to Fox News and obviously very loyal to the talk radio world. And again, this campaign is a remarkable case of how much power the talk show hosts have.

And, you know, I'm a very, very, very staunch critic of *Citizens United* and what's come after. And Tom Mann, outside the context of this book, Tom Mann and I wrote a paper on this about six months ago that you might want to take a look at. But I do deal with the role of the money, but it's not just the money. It's also I think an alignment with certain organizational forms and the rise of the conservative media, which has created real problems, including for Republicans who are trying to change their party.

But I'd like to --

MR. KRISTOL: Just to add a very brief analytical point. I do think just analytically, the money, the rich people on the Republican side, are very split. There is right wing money that supports insurgents against the corporate money that supports the establishment. I mean, the Texas corporate establishment supported David Dewhurst. He is one of them. Ted Cruz did a combination of grass-roots fundraising and some, actually not even that much I think in his case, big money from individual donors who are very conservative or quite conservative or wanted more change or liked Ted Cruz or whatever.

So that's just analytically. I don't know if Jane addresses this in her book, but I think if

one were just doing a kind of intelligent topography of -- I don't know that much about the -- if they have similar splits on the liberal side, too. But there's a huge difference between the Chamber of Commerce's attitude, which is classic Republican CEO money and some of the money that supports the insurgent right.

The other point I would make, and, again, I don't know if this is good or bad honestly for conservatives, the gulf I would say between Republican donors and with the Republican electorate is very large, and we're seeing this in this campaign. I mean, that is to say Republican donors are liberal on social issues, they want, of course, capital gains tax cuts, they want to defend the carried interest provision and stuff. The Republican voter cares less about the free market stuff, is often detached, as E.J. said, to some of the government programs at least or is nervous about radical change in them, and is often culturally conservative. Whereas he or she is viewed with contempt by a lot of these Republican donor types. That's a management problem for the party.

Reince Priebus has to deal with some donor on line A who wants to know why all these Republicans are pro-life and some activist on line B who says they're going to primary any Republican who's not pro-life. And they're entitled to it, it's a free country. And if they think one party should be pro-life, it's not an insane position. The country's kind of evenly split. Why shouldn't there be a pro-life party? So there really is a huge gulf.

Now, you could have said, I believe, in the '30s and '40s that the Democrats had a much bigger gulf between their elite and their voters. If you hung around here in Franklin Roosevelt's Washington, the kind of conversations that took place with Felix Frankfurter and Harold Ickes and all these characters was awfully different from the actual voters who were voting for the New Deal, who were a bunch of Southerner farmers and ethnic New York labor union members and so forth. Maybe it's not bad for a party to have that gulf. It shows it's a bigger party in a certain way, I would argue. It's probably not disconnected with the fact that they're able to have 30 governorships, et cetera, et cetera.

But it's an actual management and stress point in the party. I think that's been -- maybe because so many in the media don't move in the conservative world. I think they sort of tend to think conservative right wing donors, right wing voters are all aligned and there's really a big difference.

MR. DIONNE: Let's bring several people in at once. I have a slightly less, not

surprisingly, sympathetic view. I think there has been a kind of cynical deal that's gone on here where the corporate side of the party often used the social conservatives to win elections in order, primarily, to further an agenda of tax cuts and deregulation. And I also think beyond the left-right thing, the global influence of big money has an effect on the larger agenda of the country.

But there's just a quote I ran across from Ralph Reed, who said, "You're not going to get your tax cut if this vote doesn't turn out," meaning the evangelicals. "If the evangelicals don't pour out of the pews and into the voting precincts, there isn't going to be any successful business agenda." I think there you have it.

But let's see, let's bring in this lady, this gentleman, and this gentleman, and then we'll go back. If each of you could be brief, then we'll try to be brief. And I want to get some folks in the back of the room.

MS. MOON: Kathleen Moon, Daily Inter Lake, Montana. Referencing your book jacket that says how we can get our party back, is there ever going to be any room for non-sectarian moralists back in the party?

MR. DIONNE: In the Republican Party?

MS. MOON: In the Republican Party.

MR. DIONNE: Okay. Non-sectarian moralists. Oh, I like that.

MR. GRINDSTAFF: Hi. My name is Hugh Grindstaff and I was influenced by Ronald Reagan's speech. I went out and became a member of Young Americans for Freedom, a member of Young Republicans. I campaigned for Barry Goldwater in Western North Carolina.

MR. DIONNE: Am I right? I feel a conversion story coming.

MR. GRINDSTAFF: And in 1996 -- oh, I went to Vietnam in between; in 1996, on a draft Colin Powell committee; and I voted for Jon Huntsman. I met Jon Huntsman the next day with the defense minister from Singapore and I said, Ambassador Huntsman, you're probably going to be the last Republican I vote for.

The conservative movement at one time, the Bill Buckley conservatives, had a reasonable thing, but now these conservatives are like either -- and what happens is you see Ted Cruz say I'm conservative and I'm courageous, but he's never done anything to be courageous. And he's

saying he's not a Republican to begin with. So it's the conservative wing that has sort of pushed out the so-called rhino. And you can ride an elephant, you can ride a donkey, but you can't ride a rhino and they always have one or two points to make.

MR. DIONNE: Thank you. And then this gentleman over here on the left, not necessarily politically, to my left here.

SPEAKER: Maybe that, too. Just kidding. I'm curious if you think -- so theorizing here -- if Ted Cruz were to win the primary and then subsequently lose the general to a Clinton or a Sanders, how that could potentially shape the trajectory of the GOP. You know, the last couple cycles, which, full disclosure, the only couple chances I've had to vote, you hear, you know, we only tap rhinos for the general. We need a bona fide conservative and that Trump kind of represents this sort of nativist, almost sort of European, like the National Front and the UKIP. And even Rubio is trying to kind of occupy that establishment lane. If someone like Cruz with proper, you know, crossing every T bona fides for the conservative party, how that would potentially shape the discussion for party elders to kind of, you know, consider their future.

MR. DIONNE: Let me take all three of those and then Bill you can -- just on yours, I have thought, in fact, that Cruz nomination and defeat would be a very clarifying experience because there does seem to be a rule of three in these things. The Democrats lost three elections in the '80s and said we've got to change some things, and Bill Clinton won. The British Conservative Party lost three elections and, you know, while I'd be on the other side of politics from David Cameron, he did modernize and moderate the Tory Party. It's a somewhat different kind of Toryism now.

And I think that you're absolutely right that it's been easy for the right of the party to say John McCain wasn't an authentic conservative. Mitt Romney ran as a pretty authentic conservative, but they could either say that or, well, he was a rich guy who didn't know how to deal with the fact that he was rich, whatever. I think with Cruz, I suppose they could find some excuse and decide that he had the wrong personality or something at the end of it, but it would be very hard because Cruz is pretty pure. And then I think that might create some space for change in the party, which goes to your point.

You know, I talk in the book about both the reform conservatives and the original compassionate conservatives where I argue that was the glimmerings inside conservatism that something

CONSERVATISM-2016/02/16

needed to change, but that they weren't willing to go far enough to do what needed to be done. Now, my "reformacon," as I call them, friends say I won't be satisfied until they become Social Democrats, and maybe that's true. I would actually like them all to become Social Democrats. But failing that, I think that they need to be more adventurous than they have allowed themselves to be in the framework of the party as it is now. I think this would create an opening, which goes to your point.

Oddly, I pick out of the 2012 race two characters who would seem, you know, completely opposed as offering necessary lessons to the Republicans. One is your guy Huntsman, where, again, I see Huntsman as a figure of modernization and moderation not unlike Cameron. Huntsman was actually quite a bit more conservative on a lot of issues than people realize, but he was temperamental. He moderated -- he obviously had worked for Obama, so he didn't say he couldn't. He was not in a position at least to say some of the things about Obama that others did. But he presented something -- you know, presented one kind of change.

The other figure who I find fascinating is Rick Santorum. And Rick Santorum, in some ways, was a precursor to the working class rebellion that Donald Trump has ridden. It's odd to have a class war in the Republican Party led by a billionaire or at least a billionaire on paper. But Santorum really began to identify the Sam's Club Republican. And I'm very curious what would have happened if Tim Pawlenty hadn't dropped out because I think there was room for a candidate like that. And I think Pawlenty might have been the better representative of that kind of, you know, hey, we working class Republicans are here, you better pay attention to us.

Two other quick points. I talk a lot about how the purges and withdrawals from the party from Goldwater on. There used to be a lot of liberal Republicans. They were all purged, a few of them lost general elections, but Javitz, Brooke, Clifford Case, which The National Review, I learned, referred to Clifford Case, a very liberal Republican senator from New Jersey, who as early as 1959 The National Review was referring to as "Hopeless Case." Well, they purged him in 1978.

And then came the moderates, who either were purged in primaries or were defeated in Democratic districts that were willing to elect them as long as they weren't empowering, say, a Gingrich majority in Congress. But finally said we can't do this anymore, so Connie Morella in Maryland lost, Chris Shays lost, Jim Leach lost, you know, in general elections, which gets to your point about -- I don't quite

know your definition yet, but younger Republicans, the ones who are left, tend to be much more socially moderate.

And young Americans in general are far less religiously attached than older Americans; 30 to 35 percent of the under 30s or the millennials declare no allegiance to religious tradition. The party's got to come to terms with that.

Now, I'm a pro religion liberal. I worry, also. I worry about bigotry against non-believers. I also worry about bigotry against believers. And I think that makes me a liberal. But, you know, so I don't expect the Republican Party to abandon its alliances with religious people, but I also think those alliances may change. Younger evangelicals, for example, have somewhat different attitudes on some of these questions than older evangelicals.

But, as I said, to go back to your question, a Cruz defeat on a stoutly conservative platform could open up the space that I am hoping for so that we can get a conservatism that all of us can live with, even though some of us would still oppose them.

Go ahead.

MR. KRISTOL: I don't really disagree with much. I mean, I think a Cruz victory on a stoutly conservative platform would be --

MR. DIONNE: That would also realign the country. (Laughter)

MR. KRISTOL: That would realign it. That would be a moment for liberals to, I don't know, move to Sweden or something. I don't know what they would do. Maybe it's unlikely. It's not as unlikely perhaps as --

MR. DIONNE: I think actually they'd win the midterms by a landslide --

MR. KRISTOL: Well, that's probably --

MR. DIONNE: -- and win the next election.

MR. KRISTOL: No, I was talking with a young person actually, a very bright young person, who's thinking of running for Congress, who is sort of like should I run this time? I think I could have a chance, but maybe it's safer to wait till 2018 because if the Democrats win, you know, it's a much better chance.

MR. DIONNE: And Democrats will have all the young candidates.

MR. KRISTOL: I don't want to make a -- yes. No, I don't think so. Well, that's an interesting question. I think that's just a practical problem for the party. They really need to get some young candidates.

MR. DIONNE: Well, it's the loss of the two midterms that have really killed the bench.

MR. KRISTOL: Well, maybe.

MR. DIONNE: In other words, those two elections losses -- there are people ready to come up, also, but that's another conversation.

MR. KRISTOL: Well, we'll see if they do. But this narrowing of the party, I'm old to remember there were pro-life Democrats, you know, and there aren't anymore. And you can say -- I mean, there are a few.

MR. DIONNE: There still are.

MR. KRISTOL: There are. There are almost no pro-life Democrats left in Congress. And, in fact, they all say --

MR. DIONNE: Well, most of them were defeated by --

SPEAKER: There are Democrats and there are --

MR. KRISTOL: That's actually not the case.

MR. DIONNE: Most of them were defeated by Republicans who said they weren't pro-life enough. But that's --

MR. KRISTOL: No, that's not even the case.

MR. DIONNE: Yes, that is the case.

MR. KRISTOL: Well, Bob Casey's being denied the opportunity to speak at the '92 convention was a big --

MR. DIONNE: Bob Casey's son is a pro-life Democrat in the Senate.

MR. KRISTOL: Yes, he is. There are about three of them in the Senate. And, again, they get huge pressure whenever they deviate from the pro-choice agenda. So, look, you can -- the parties --

MR. DIONNE: Both parties (inaudible).

MR. KRISTOL: Well, no, but I'm just -- analytically, I mean, it's just silly to be one side.

CONSERVATISM-2016/02/16

Both parties are much more homogeneous than they were before. Both parties are. The partisan voting indexes of the Democrats are as high as the partisan voting indexes of the Republicans. It differs a little bit with who's President and, therefore, there's sort of more pressure if you're in a minority sometimes to hold the 44 together or whatever. But Harry Reid was as tough a leader and insisted on party loyalty and they went with the liberal stuff down the line to the detriment, incidentally, of candidates who were running in 2014, quite obviously, because they had to hold the party together. I don't criticize that. It's just a fact.

Now, it might be nicer to have the politics where the party -- where there were liberal Republicans and conservative Democrats, southern Democrats and northeastern Republicans. It's the politics I grew up with. It's instinctively something probably people like E.J. and I are more comfortable with.

On the other hand, at the height of those politics people didn't like it. The American Political Science Association said we need to have clear choice between the parties; James MacGregor Burns, the deadlock of democracy; John Kennedy being frustrated by all these Southern Democrats in Congress. So you could argue this one either way, but, in any case, no one is controlling this, honestly. It's a fact, maybe it's an unfortunate fact, of American life. It goes with sorting of other kinds that maybe is also unfortunate that's due to pretty deep-seated trends in the society and the economy.

So anyway, I don't think -- but making it seem as if some magician is running the Republican Party and insisting on homogeneity I think is not the case. You know, there are primaries. That's a good thing in this country. Charlie Crist does not get to say because he's governor of Florida that, hey, I now get to be senator without being challenged by a young, very impressive, Cuban-American who had worked his way up and who decided to take on Crist. That's a good thing for the country just as Obama taking on Clinton in 2007-8 was a good thing for the country.

And too much of this nostalgia for the good old days, when Jon Huntsman -- yes, that's a real impressive thing, you know. Your father's almost a billionaire and you live in the most conservative state in the country and you, in effect, inherit the governorship because you're one of the most famous Mormon families in the Mormon state, and then you get to be -- you know, then you get to serve Obama and you speak Mandarin because you're well educated and everyone loves you on *Morning Joe* and here at Brookings.

I admire Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz more because those guys took on the establishment in their parties and came from modest beginnings. And I think that's a much more promising future for the Republican Party.

Now, they could be wrong on all kinds of issues and Cruz might not be the most lovable guy in the world and Rubio may lack certain qualifications to be president. People are absolutely entitled to make that judgment, obviously. But I don't really look at Cruz and Rubio and for that matter Tom Cotton, the first kid from his town ever to go to Harvard and who then goes to Harvard Law School and then volunteers and becomes an infantry officer in the Army. I don't look at people like Cruz and Cotton and Rubio and many, many others, incidentally, and think, well, gee, that's really just a kind of narrow bunch of people who somehow have taken control of something that they weren't entitled to take control of.

MR. DIONNE: Kristol attacks prominent Mormon family. (Laughter)

I want to sort of draw a circle around there and let's give the mic -- if each of you could be brief, I'll let the event go over just a little bit. Right? Yes, we've got about five minutes and we will each give brief answers.

SPEAKER: I'll be brief.

MR. DIONNE: So let's start back there and work up.

And just on the polarization in Congress one fact. The political scientists Kenneth Poole and Howard Rosenthal summarizing their findings, the Republican -- Chris Ingraham in The Washington Post -- the Republican Party turned away from the center line from '75 to 2015, turned away from the center line and haven't looked back. The Democrats have been drifting away from the center, too, but nowhere nearly as quickly, the polarization just as asymmetric, but we can argue that.

MR. KRISTOL: That's not true.

MR. DIONNE: I think there's a lot of data --

MR. KRISTOL: On the most important foreign policy votes of '07/'08, the Democratic Party lined up almost uniformly to try to force the President to pull us out of a war that we were in the middle of. On the foreign policy votes, which are the most important votes obviously, in this Congress the Republican Party has consistently voted more with President Obama --

MR. DIONNE: Oh, no.

MR. KRISTOL: -- on keeping troops in Afghanistan, on supporting the intelligence programs, on resisting various left wing attacks on his foreign policy. The Republicans have actually behaved in a fairly statesman-like way, I would say, on foreign policy.

MR. DIONNE: We could talk about Syria. I wish we had had this at the beginning. We really could have met, we could have sort of had a real argument because I think, for example, if you look at the Syria vote, yes, Cantor and Boehner backed Obama, but all the Republicans went south not being prepared to give him that authority.

Anyway, let's --

MR. KRISTOL: Why was there never a vote on that? Remind me what happened.

MR. DIONNE: There was never --

MR. KRISTOL: The President of the United States withdrew his proposal to use force.

MR. DIONNE: Yes, and partly because the Republicans, in fact, other than Boehner and Cantor --

MR. KRISTOL: He would have --

MR. DIONNE: -- made very clear -- you think --

MR. KRISTOL: I think he withdrew it because he didn't want to go to war, he didn't want to use force in Syria.

MR. DIONNE: No, I think he -- well, I think that's what he decided, but I also think he did not get that support on foreign policy. But we'll continue that after.

Let me get the four folks here in. You notice Bill only got really mad when we turned to the foreign policy issues.

MR. KRISTOL: The rest of it's all just (inaudible).

MR. SIMPKINS: I'll try to be brief. My name's Alec Simpkins. I'm a grad student over at American University. My question is more towards Mr. Kristol, but comments from both are great.

What are your feelings about the health of the conservative movement given that most of the recent gains can at least partially be attributed to gerrymandering, low voter turnout, and voter suppression tactics?

MR. DIONNE: Thank you. Please.

MR. CHECCO: Thank you. Larry Checco. A hypothetical question for Bill.

Earlier in this conversation you said you loathe Mr. Trump. Should he -- should he -- on the offshoot become the nominee, would you vote for him to keep the party together or would you stay home? And how typical do you think your reaction would be to the rest of the Republican Party?

MR. GRUENBERG: Mark Gruenberg. I run a small news service. I'm going to follow up on one of the other questions, but also expand it.

How dangerous is it for the country that the Republican Party has shifted so far in that it's virtually written off large blocks of voters? Not only does it not compete for them, but the Democrats don't have to compete for them. They can take them for granted.

MR. DIONNE: Thank you. That's a good question. This gentleman up here with the tie.

SPEAKER: Thank you. I've got one question for you, Mr. Dionne, and one question for Mr. Kristol.

With respect to one of the Mr. Kristol's follow-up and what you have in your book with respect to since the Obama election Democrats have lost a tremendous amount of individuals within the House of Representatives and the Senate, as well as governors, and they seemingly don't have a bench. I mean, we have a 75-year-old Democratic Socialist running and a 69-year-old woman running for the presidency. I don't see a Democratic bench at this point. If you could respond to something like that.

With respect to Mr. Kristol, because Justice Scalia has just passed on, I'm kind of curious if you could somehow do a Jeff Greenfield-type of what-ifs scenario. If, in fact, Justice Scalia would have either chosen not to vote with respect to Bush-Gore or would have voted for Gore, might the GOP have been better off with a one-term Al Gore presidency and then certainly a President Obama would not have materialized and perhaps even a two-term John McCain would have materialized instead? (Laughter)

MR. DIONNE: Bill, why don't you answer whatever you want out of there real quick and then I'll just do a couple of closing things in response to those.

MR. KRISTOL: Well, that's a fantastic scenario. (Laughter) I hadn't really thought about it. I would say in general, in politics as in life, often what seems like a good thing is a good thing in the short term for your side or your party or your interests and ends up being not such a simply good thing.

CONSERVATISM-2016/02/16

It's very important to remember that as we go through the heat of different elections. And I agree, one shouldn't over-interpret Republican off-year victories in 2010 as 2014. One shouldn't over-interpret an incumbent President of the United States being reelected by 4 percentage points, which is very normal in 2012. So, you know, life is just more contingent and more unexpected than one sometimes thinks.

No, I wouldn't support Trump. I would try to have a conservative candidate on the ballot. It's a little complicated about how you do that, though I think there's plenty of time, just as Mike Bloomberg might run as a centrist. I do think he really would run if Sanders were likely to be the Democratic nominee and either Trump or Cruz the Republican nominee. If you have three, why not have four? And why don't we get to have an actual conservative? I mean, you would have three candidates if you had Trump, Bloomberg -- Cruz is different. I mean, Cruz is just -- Trump would run as -- Bloomberg would run as a centrist. That would be right center of left presumably, Sanders-Bloomberg-Cruz.

I think, incidentally, the conventional wisdom that Bloomberg couldn't win that race is wrong. I mean, I don't know that he could. I just think it would be an interesting, competitive race. And it's not clear to me that Bloomberg doesn't end up with 38 percent of the vote in that race, but who knows? That would be a very interesting new moment in American politics.

A four-way race would be an interesting new moment in American politics. I think that's the Trump-Bloomberg-Sanders.

MR. DIONNE: That last time we had a real four-way race we then had a Civil War, so it's not promising.

MR. KRISTOL: Yes, that's a problem, right. (Laughter)

So I'm for a conservative and I would like to have a real conservative and a principled man and someone who's temperamentally and otherwise qualified to be President, not Trump. So I wouldn't support Trump. I'd hate to stay home. That would be unfortunate. You like to vote for someone you believe in.

I don't think the GOP gains are mostly due to voter suppression or even low turnout or certainly not gerrymandering. Obviously the state and the governorship gains and the Senate gains can't be explained, by definition, by gerrymandering. In the House I think most of the studies show they probably do pick up maybe a dozen House seats, but certainly not enough to make the majority with

gerrymandering.

I think E.J. points out in the book that Romney, actually a losing Republican presidential candidate, carried a majority of House districts. So there's --

MR. DIONNE: Which I used to prove the point of gerrymandering, by the way. In other words, Romney lost by 5 million votes and carried a substantial majority of congressional districts. Some of that is because Democrats are packed into cities.

MR. KRISTOL: Yes, I mean, it's mostly that.

MR. DIONNE: But gerrymandering, particularly in key states -- Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, North Carolina and Ohio -- there is a complete disjunction between the seats and the votes in those states.

MR. KRISTOL: The Republicans won --

MR. DIONNE: It's not that Democrats don't ever gerrymander. It's that Republicans controlled the process.

MR. KRISTOL: They happened to control things in 2010.

MR. DIONNE: And they really --

MR. KRISTOL: The Republicans won the popular national vote in 2010 and 2014. So guess what, they control the House in 2010 and they control both Houses in 2014. I think it does get them maybe 10 seats.

MR. DIONNE: I think it's more than that, but go ahead.

MR. KRISTOL: I doubt it, but anyway, whatever. It doesn't give them enough to have the majority and, you know, obviously both parties have done it. So I don't know if that answers sort of the main questions.

MR. DIONNE: Well, let me just close, because we've got to move on --

MR. KRISTOL: Oh, I think it's bad the Republicans -- I don't think it's fair to say they don't compete for certain blocks of voters. They have had very little success in competing for certain blocks of voters. And the way campaigns work these days, you obviously spend most of your resources and time going for voters you think you can get.

And, you know, I wish -- I am very much for those Republicans who think they can break

into other communities that they haven't done well in before, and I think a lot have at the state level and even some at the congressional level. Certainly at the presidential level we've had more of a mobilization in the last two elections than a persuasion.

Maybe this year because of the chaos actually we will have more of a persuasion election perhaps just as everyone. And generally speaking, the conventional wisdom's always wrong and whenever everyone agrees on everything it's about to change. And so everyone has agreed that we're in a totally polarized, two-party system characterized by mobilization. Once every political scientist and social scientist in the country is basically on board with that I always figure it's about to change.

(Laughter)

No, seriously. This is usually how things work, you know. So I think maybe we will. Maybe the chaos of this year will be a healthy thing if you didn't like repeating over and over again in a certain way the Bush-Gore election, you know, four times with a tiny demographic advantage for the Democrats.

MR. DIONNE: Let me just close because I want to go sign books and I'll answer questions as I sign. I do think the current situation is very unhealthy. I think it's unhealthy for the Republican Party. I think what you're seeing, interestingly, in the primaries is a lot of competition for the minority vote. The Latinos and African-Americans are such an important part of the Democratic Coalition that Bernie Sanders and Hillary Clinton know that they can be pivotal in the outcome. But I think it's very problematic when a -- and it wasn't always true. The Republican Party, we forget, helped give us the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts. And now the Republican Party where it has control is passing these voter suppression measures, which goes to your question.

I am worried that, you know, there are -- David Frum has written this, so this is not just liberals who are saying this, that, you know, looking down the road the Republicans can either try to create a more diverse constituency or they can pursue a variety of measures to shrink the electorate. And, you know, they're doing that in the court with trying to base congressional districts on registered voters rather than on citizens, which will shift the lines their way. They're doing it in other states with measures that are fairly blatant in their effect on who can vote. My favorite being in Texas, you can't use a student ID, but you can use a gun license to vote, which led me to believe that liberals have an interest

CONSERVATISM-2016/02/16

in arming every Texan to allow them to vote. (Laughter) But this is a peculiar and troublesome thing. I think there's a better alternative for the Republican Party than that.

I don't think all these victories have come from that. I think that the victories in 2010 and 2014 came mostly because of the age structure of each coalition.

Incidentally, there is something of a Democratic bench still. If you think of it, who would have jumped in if Hillary Clinton hadn't run? And the two obvious people are Kirsten Gillibrand and Amy Klobuchar, are two obvious candidates who would jump in. So there is a bench. It's not as big as it should be, but I think I answered your question by talking about the age difference.

I am a liberal. I will continue to be a liberal and a Social Democrat. I am unlikely to join Bill's side ever again having appreciated it when I was 12 years old very much. (Laughter) But I do want a better kind of conservatism. I think it would be good for the country. I actually even think if they listen to me, conservatives themselves would be better off, but I don't expect that to happen anytime soon.

Thank you all very much for coming. (Applause)

* * * * *