

Bob Vander Plaats: “Then Shame on Me”

After Iowa Republican Party Chairman Jeff Kaufmann accused The FAMiLY LEADER President and CEO Bob Vander Plaats and other conservative leaders of planning a “coup” at the GOP national convention next month, the evangelical pro-family leader issued his own statement.

Calling out the state chairman for his “shame” campaign, Vander Plaats said he is merely holding Trump, whom he considers a friend, accountable. If this warrants shame, he added, “then ... ‘shame on me’”:

Shame on me for believing there are principles worth adhering to regardless of the R or D behind your name. Shame on me for believing you shouldn’t disparage people for their ethnicity or disability.

And if there is shame on me, then I am in good company. Former Speaker of the House and Trump supporter Newt Gingrich also called out the presumptive 2016 nominee for his absurdity. Current Speaker of the House Paul Ryan called Mr. Trump’s remarks about the Hispanic judge “textbook racism.” And respected Iowa State Sen. David Johnson left the Republican Party over Trump’s insulting and disparaging remarks.

I consider Mr. Trump a friend. And as I told him in his office, I want to encourage him to be the best husband, father and leader he can be. But, no, I don’t approve of everything he says or does. And if his actions and words continue to demean and diminish the office he seeks, then I believe every accountability option needs to be on the table at the Republican National Convention in Cleveland.

I along with many others believe there needs to be a higher

standard for a presidential nominee than merely donning the Republican Party name. I believe Mr. Trump should be held accountable for his profanity, for his vulgarity and for mocking anyone and everyone, including the disabled and prisoners of war.

And if our leaders, like the Iowa GOP chairman, can only “shame” those who desire a higher standard and who insist on the highest character for the highest office, then it also reveals the true motive of our political parties. It has become all about winning versus about leading, and therein lies the problem.

I hope and pray that Mr. Trump embraces the opportunity the Republican Party voters have offered him. I hope he campaigns with dignity, integrity and an optimism for all that reflects the spirit of America. I hope he tells us that he will surround himself with the best, the most trusted and the brightest to lead with him. I hope he begins leading with humility, to earn the American people’s respect and, ultimately, their vote.

I encourage my faith and family peers to insist on this type of leadership from Mr. Trump at our June 21 meeting in New York. And, I appeal to all the delegates to the national convention, including our Iowa leaders, to assess Mr. Trump’s adherence to and modeling of principled conservatism and trusted leadership before giving him the nomination in Cleveland.

This accountability will make Mr. Trump a better candidate and a more effective leader. Bowing our knee to the “R” and allowing Mr. Trump to be whatever to whomever and whenever will lead to a disastrous defeat for Mr. Trump and the plethora of Republicans seeking office in November.

At the end of the day, may we all, including our political leaders, choose to seek the kind of personal and cultural

transformation that honors God and blesses people. When this occurs, we will elect the right people ... institute the right policies ... and be an authentic model for others to follow.