

Here's Who Ralph Reed Says 'Checks All the Boxes' on the Social Issues

Earlier this week, Ralph Reed, founder and chairman of the Faith & Freedom Coalition, was asked by National Public Radio's Renee Montagne to explain how Donald Trump was gaining the support of so many evangelical voters in the Republican presidential primary race.

"First of all, we need a reality check. He is winning a plurality of that vote. And it's impressive in a crowded field, no question about it," he said. "But right now, Donald Trump is winning about a third of the self-identified evangelical vote, which, by the way, was 51 percent of primary votes cast in 2012. So it's a very significant constituency.

"But still, that's about the same percentage that a Republican front-runner traditionally wins in the primaries. That's what McCain won; it's what Romney won. So I think when you put it in context why—number one, they don't vote primarily based on identity politics."

Reed then said "under the rubric" where evangelical voters are only voting their values, they should have voted for President Carter, a "very pious Southern Baptist" over Ronald Reagan, "the first divorced man to ever run for president." But they didn't. So Reed answered the question why.

"Because they are like all voters. They're driven by issues. And on the social and moral issues—marriage, abortion, religious liberty, support for Israel—Trump not only checks all those boxes," he said. "If you go to one of his rallies, as I did, it's surprising how much of his stump speech speaks to those issues. And secondly, like all voters, many believers—not just evangelicals but Catholics and those of

other faiths—are also driven by economic anxiety and some of the issues that Trump talks about in terms of projecting U.S. strength on the international stage. They're not immune from those appeals."

Reed was also quick to point out that neither he nor the Faith & Freedom Coalition have endorsed any candidate. He said he was remaining neutral in the primary race.

"I've got a lot of friends running for president, and I'm for my friends," he said.