

Looking at the Trump-Ryan Meeting Like a Marriage

I wonder if there was a justice of the peace at today's big meeting between Speaker of the House Paul Ryan and Donald Trump. After all, the GOP needs unity and just like in a marriage, the two really need to become one. So maybe RNC Chairman Reince Priebus started the meeting out as follows:

"Dearly Beloved, we are gathered here today in the presence of these witnesses, to join Paul Ryan and Donald Trump in GOP Unity; commended to be honorable among all; and therefore is not to be entered into lightly but reverently, passionately, lovingly and solemnly. Into this—these two persons present now come to be joined. If any person can show just cause why they may not be joined together—let them speak now or forever hold their peace."

Wouldn't it be nice if it were that tidy? By all "official" accounts the meeting went well today. Here's the joint statement Ryan and Trump put out:

"The United States cannot afford another four years of the Obama White House, which is what Hillary Clinton represents. That is why it's critical that Republicans unite around our shared principles, advance a conservative agenda, and do all we can to win this fall. With that focus, we had a great conversation this morning. While we were honest about our few differences, we recognize that there are also many important areas of common ground. We will be having additional discussions, but remain confident there's a great opportunity to unify our party and win this fall, and we are totally committed to working together to achieve that goal. We are extremely proud of the fact that many millions of new voters have entered the primary system, far more than ever before in the Republican Party's history. This was our first meeting,

but it was a very positive step toward unification.”

A few thoughts: First of all, pay attention to the words, “our few differences” and “additional discussions.” That’s code for the fact that they still have quite a bit of work to do between now and Cleveland. Do I suspect they will come together before then? Yes. They have to. It doesn’t matter if Senator Ben Sasse is against Trump. It DOES matter if the Speaker of the House isn’t on board. Why? Because whether you think Ryan is sipping the GOP establishment Kool-Aid or not, the reality is he’s influential and Trump needs him on board to push his presidential agenda in the long term and not sabotage him in the short term. I was also struck by the following line: “We are extremely proud of the fact that many millions of new voters have entered the primary system, far more than ever before in the Republican Party’s history.” That has Trump written all over it. In other words, Trump’s deal making skills hinge on leverage. That sentence above is his ultimate leverage. He is and can bring new voters into the GOP. As to how the GOP would look afterwards is up for a nice controversial discussion. But if you’re talking about winning a General Election, the reality is this: Trump is bringing in new voters just like the GOP has wanted all along. Maybe it’s not the way the Republican Party drew it up on the chalkboard but it’s happening.

Bottom line: Ryan needs Trump and Trump needs Ryan and that means they both need unity sooner rather than later. It’ll happen but it will be the molasses version. {eoa}

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