

Richard Viguerie: It's Our Job to Act as a 'Fourth Force' in Government

For many years, I've talked about the three forces in American politics; establishment Democrats, establishment Republicans and those "third forces" outside the two parties—movements such as environmentalists, race-based organizations and especially the conservative movement.

And I've also often warned conservatives that for our movement to be effective we need to remain a third force and not become mere appendages of the Republican Party.

However, now there is a new force in American politics that is outside the two establishment political parties and the usual right-left third forces, and that's President Donald J. Trump and his populist legions.

In the case of the relationship between conservatives and the Trump White House, it is well to remember O'Sullivan's First Law, named for John O'Sullivan, former editor of *National Review*: Any institution that is not explicitly (and actively) right-wing will become left-wing over time.

I think we can stipulate that President Trump is not a movement conservative; he's a common-sense patriotic businessman with some conservative instincts who is especially and uniquely attuned to the anxieties and hopes of his populist supporters.

The president has some conservative advisers, such as Kellyanne Conway, Steve Bannon and Vice President Mike Pence, but there are also others with whom he is especially close, such as daughter Ivanka and son-in-law Jared Kushner, who are moderate to liberal on many issues.

Meaning, of course, that to achieve the goal of governing America according to conservative principles, we movement conservatives must now push both the Capitol Hill Republican establishment and President Trump and his advisers to the right.

But how does that work for conservatives in the age of Trump, where the President and many of his supporters and advisers do not fit neatly into the old conservative-versus-establishment ideological boxes?

The Capitol Hill Republican establishment's recent Ryancare disaster should serve as a stark reminder to the conservative movement that being cheerleaders for the establishment GOP or the White House is the road straight to perdition and that conservatives best serve the nation when they act to push Republicans to follow conservative principles.

As I recounted in my book *Takeover*, during the 1970s and 1980s, we of the New Right weren't operating as an appendage of the GOP; we were working through it in the spirit of the biblical injunction in the book of Romans to be in the world, but not of the world.

We weren't even operating as supporters of any individual candidate, even though eventually all of us who were active in the New Right came to support Ronald Reagan for president.

We saw ourselves as separate from the established Republican Party. Our goal was to promote a set of conservative principles and values and to back candidates who would stand for those values and principles—if that meant opposing the established leaders of the Republican Party, so be it.

The strategy of acting as a force outside the establishment Republican Party is still valid today; the problem is that too many conservative coalitions and organizations—including some we created back in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s—have become captive to the Republican establishment or the White House.

During the administration of President George W. Bush, the leaders of some of these organizations would get all aflutter if they got a call from Karl Rove; however, if they got a call that President Bush was on the line, they would wet their pants even as Rove and his boss, President Bush, were betraying them and supporting policies that went against the conservative ideas they supposedly stood for.

Some conservatives came dangerously close to this error during the run-up to the aborted Ryancare vote. Apparently to preserve their access, some national conservative organizations and leaders were all too willing to turn a blind eye to the misinformation and outright lies about Ryancare that were coming out of Speaker Ryan's office or were prepared to simply go along with the President during this 100-day honeymoon period.

As it was in President Reagan's day, the establishment Republican leadership is the first barrier to implementing a conservative governing agenda, but now there's another force we must consider—a populist President Trump.

Today, many conservative organizations have solid, practical, limited government constitutional conservative policy prescriptions that could help President Trump fulfill his many campaign promises, but as Ryancare proved, he's not likely to find many of them in bills emanating from Speaker Ryan's office.

We conservatives must act as a fourth force and urge conservative Members of Congress to translate those ideas into bill form, get them introduced and lobby, push, cajole and demand that those bills get hearings or the opportunity to be offered as amendments.

Then let's take President Trump at his word that he truly wants to drain the swamp, and in that case, his agenda aligns much more with our conservative ideas than it does with those

of the Republican establishment.

On tax reform, economic growth, reducing the size and scope of government and many other areas, President Trump has indicated he wants to pass a bold conservative agenda. Let's make it our job to be the "fourth force" that pushes him to the right and convinces him that to pass that agenda, he must explicitly and actively move right and align himself with conservatives.
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Richard Viguerie transformed American politics in the 1960s and '70s by pioneering the use of direct mail fundraising in the political and ideological spheres. He used computerized direct mail fundraising to help build the conservative movement, which then elected Ronald Reagan as the first conservative president of the modern era. As the "Funding Father of the conservative movement," Viguerie motivated millions of Americans to participate in politics for the first time, greatly expanding the base of active citizenship. He is our era's equivalent of Tom Paine, using a direct mail letter rather than a pamphlet to deliver his call to arms.

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