

Richard Viguerie: We Must Nationalize This Election

For many years I've been telling the GOP establishment that Republicans never win a big election unless they nationalize the election—that means drawing a clear contrast with the Democrats and giving the voters “a tune they can whistle” on big conservative themes.

The Republican establishment has studiously ignored that advice and the defeats of Jerry Ford, George HW Bush, Bob Dole, John McCain and Mitt Romney, as well as the 1998 and 2006 congressional elections are proof that running a content-free campaign and refusing to nationalize the election is a losing strategy for Republicans, especially in a “change election” year like 2016.

And in 2016 the big issues are all about change: ending Obama's policy of amnesty for illegal aliens and stopping Hillary's open borders plan; protecting America from radical Muslims and other national security threats; undoing the Obamacare disaster; and ending the culture of lies, lawlessness and corruption with which Obama and Hillary Clinton have poisoned our government.

Poll after poll shows that Americans are deeply concerned about Obama's failed national security strategy—or lack of strategy—the economic consequences of Obama's plan to grant amnesty to millions of illegal aliens and the culture of lies that Obama and Clinton have fostered—and Democrats have embraced—on everything from Obamacare, to Benghazi, to the IRS targeting of conservatives, to Hillary Clinton's email server and the many pay-to-play schemes in which she engaged.

Hillary Clinton and the Democratic Party position are upside down on half-a-dozen key political questions, but boiled down

to their essence they all fit broadly into these three issues: Amnesty, National Security and Clinton's Culture of Lies.

In the last Gallup poll to ask the question, 69 percent of Americans say big government is a greater threat to the U.S. in the future than is big business or big labor. That's just below the record high of 72 percent booked during the nearly-50 years the Gallup Organization has asked this question.

Despite the fact that even 53 percent of Democrats share that view, government accountability—truth-telling about what the government is doing—is only being talked about by one candidate: Donald Trump.

Transparency and accountability are completely absent from the GOP national agenda.

Ending the dangerous Muslim invasion of America via the "refugee" resettlement program is also absent from the national GOP agenda.

So is border security and stopping amnesty for illegal aliens—virtually no Republican except Donald Trump is talking about them, even though they are 60 to 70 percent-plus issues with voters.

The problem is, the Republican establishment and its insider clique of Washington-based political consultants prefer to run content-free campaigns rather than make the election a clear choice between Democrat failures on those issues and conservative alternatives because in all too many cases they have been silent partners in the failures.

The 2016 presidential election is, or should be, a once in a lifetime opportunity to differentiate the parties and to brand the Republican Party as the party of limited and accountable government, while the Democrats are branded as the party of Hillary Clinton's unaccountable, corrupt, out-of-control

government.

But that differentiation and branding won't take place if the GOP hews to the current strategy of Speaker Paul Ryan and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell of running content-free "prevent defense" campaigns that "move to the center" by touting show votes and minor issues that alienate conservatives and have nothing to do with the top concerns of the electorate.

We are the leaders we have been waiting for. If not now, when?
If not us, who?

Conservatives can't wait around and hope that sometime in the next month the establishment Republicans figure this out. Over many years they have demonstrated that they will not change—they are too invested in the insider consultant-driven culture that brought the party, content-free as it has become, to this point.

Starting today, starting right now, each conservative must commit themselves to demanding answers from the Democrats—and establishment Republicans—on where they stand on these issues: amnesty; national security, especially as it relates to radical Islam; and Obama and Clinton's lies and lack of accountability on everything from "you can keep your doctor," to Benghazi, to the public health threat posed by the illegal aliens flooding our southern border, to the number of Muslim "refugees" admitted to our country.

You can start by focusing your conservative organization, if you're part of one, on these three issues: Amnesty, National Security and Clinton's Culture of Lies. You can write op-eds, letters to the editor, blog posts, email and social media posts.

You can also exercise the First Amendment rights guaranteed in the Constitution and preserved by the Supreme Court and take out an ad calling out the candidates on these issues.

Finally, and most effectively, you can tell your friends and acquaintances where you stand, why this election is so important and why they should reject Hillary Clinton and vote for Donald Trump and other conservative candidates who have committed to the conservative position on these issues.

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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