

RNC Chair: Trump About to Have His Reagan Moment

In the 1980 presidential election, many will remember that Ronald Reagan crushed incumbent Jimmy Carter, winning 45 states to claim his first term as President of the United States.

Few remember, however, that Reagan spent much of 1979 and 1980 languishing in the polls. It was after his “pivot moment” at the Republican National Convention in 1980 that his electoral landslide truly began.

Republican National Committee chairman Reince Priebus remembers, though. And, he referenced that fact Sunday while discussing the 2016 presidential election with ABC’s “This Week with George Stephanopoulos.”

The host cited a new ABC News/Washington Post poll that shows while Republican presidential nominee-in-waiting Donald Trump has closed the gap with his Democratic rival, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, from 12 to four points, he’s still trailing. Meanwhile, the poll suggested 60 percent of Americans believe he is unqualified to be president.

“Reagan had the same problem in 1979 going into 1980, and I think what it does show in reality is that [Trump] has a lot of space to grow,” he said. “He’s likable. He’s interesting to people, he’s intriguing.”

Calling him a “mature pick,” Priebus said Trump’s running mate, Indiana Gov. Mike Pence, would also be helpful. But, even with that boost, the RNC chairman agreed Trump faces a critical moment when he takes the stage to accept his party’s nomination.

“Thursday night’s a critical night for him, delivering a great

speech, the balloon drop, the people in this country saying, 'I can see Donald Trump being in the White House. I think he's presidential,'" Priebus said. "And it's the same thing that happened in 1980 when the bottom fell out of [Jimmy] Carter, when people said, 'Ronald Reagan can be president, I can trust him, and I see him in the White House.'"