

Ted Cruz Is First Top-Tier Movement Conservative Candidate Since Reagan

The official announcement that Senator Ted Cruz of Texas is running for president changes everything in the 2016 presidential campaign.

Ted Cruz isn't running for vice president or secretary of Housing and Urban Development in the Jeb Bush administration.

Every Republican candidate for president will have to move to significantly to the right, starting with Jeb Bush and Scott Walker, and define their position on amnesty for illegal aliens, on fighting and winning the war radical Islam has declared on America, on spending, the deficit and the debt, and on repealing Obamacare, against the positions Ted Cruz will talk about and campaign on in the coming months.

They will all have to move right to respond to Cruz, or be left behind by a grassroots conservative electorate fed up with Republican candidates who are merely principle-free messengers for an out of touch Washington elite.

Ted Cruz's base is the conservative movement, and although other Republican presidential candidates since Ronald Reagan, such as Gary Bauer and Michelle Bachmann, looked to movement conservatives for their support, they were never able to expand beyond their starting base of support into the top-tier of candidates.

Ted Cruz is the first top-tier movement conservative candidate since Reagan for three reasons that separate him immediately from the rest of the Republican pack.

First, is his ability to unite all three elements of the old

Reagan coalition; national defense conservatives, economic conservatives and social conservatives with the new fourth leg of the 21st century's winning conservative coalition—the constitutional conservatives of the Tea Party movement.

Others, such as Scott Walker, Bobby Jindal and Rand Paul may have some appeal to elements of that coalition, but no one unites it the way Ted Cruz does.

Second is Ted Cruz's understanding of and almost spiritual bond with America's country class—the voters outside the Beltway who have looked with alarm at Obama's fundamental transformation of America and seen not a spending bill to be negotiated or a deal to be cut, as the Republican establishment does, but an existential threat to American exceptionalism and the future of constitutional government that must be resisted at every turn.

Finally and perhaps most importantly, are Ted Cruz's zest for the battle of ideas between conservatives and progressives in both political parties and his intellectual gifts for fighting it.

The Ted Cruz campaign is planned as a great conservative crusade to, as he put it in his compelling announcement speech at Liberty University, reignite the promise of America.

And this means with Ted Cruz in the race voters will have a clear choice between policy grounded in the thought of the modern conservative movement and the Washington deal-making that has often corrupted Republican campaigns of the recent past.

Today, everything in American politics changed, and that tremor you felt at midday was the shiver in the D.C. establishment as millions of conservatives across America responded to Ted Cruz and said in unison, we've found our leader and "We demand our Liberty."