

WHAT IS A CONSERVATIVE?

I've been asked before, "What is a Conservative?" I'd like to express what a simple, middle class, common sense, Midwestern American Conservative believes in.

One of my favorite Ronald Reagan quotes is, "All great change begins at the dinner table." Unfortunately, our current president, and so many of his Washington partners, has twisted that truth into something like, "All great change begins in Washington." In fact, the president stated recently that, "...at this particular moment, only government...can break the vicious cycles that are crippling our economy." My Conservative heart has one word to say to that sentiment: "Bull."

Government is not a bad thing. We have an amazing representative republic governmental system in America. But the government **is** a bad thing when it attempts to do what it was never designed to do – when it defies Abraham Lincoln's belief that "You cannot help men permanently by doing for them what they could and should do for themselves."

I believe the United States is the greatest country on this earth. We got to that position by God's blessing and by the hard work, strong character and integrity of our people, supported by a limited governmental system that stayed out of our way and provided us the freedom to achieve greatness and to succeed.

So, with that said, here is what I believe a Conservative is:

A Conservative recognizes that our Federal Government is great at providing us with the best military in the world to protect us, but is terrible at managing and spending money – so we ask those in Washington, why are so many Democrats pushing to decrease our military and increase the amount of money the government has control of?

A Conservative believes that government doesn't make money like you and me – they get their money by taxing our paychecks. So, any increase in government spending is an increase in the money they take from you and me.

A Conservative realizes that tax cuts across the board are what invigorates and grows an economy, just as we saw in the 80's with the Reagan tax cuts and in the early 2000's with the Bush tax cuts. So, in this current economic situation, why would anyone think that more government involvement, resulting in more of our money taken, is the answer to helping us, especially in light of the fact that it was largely government involvement that got us into this mess in the first place? I so wish this administration would follow the words of their great Democrat icon John F. Kennedy, who said, "Ask not what your country can do for you..." How I long for our president to stand up in these tough times, using his influence to cheer on the millions of workers and encourage us that we have within us the means to get through this difficult time. To remind us that for hundreds of years it's been the sweat and toil of the American worker, working in a society free from the entanglement of government, that has built our economy into the greatest in the world. To encourage us that better days are ahead – not that we're in for a long-term mess unless he steps in to save the day.

A Conservative asks why the rich pay higher tax rates than others, a policy that basically sends a message to Americans that if you work hard, achieve your goals, and climb the ladder of success, when you get up that ladder, we're going to punish you by taking more of your money. We also understand that the rich are indispensable in this country and should be applauded for what they have

accomplished and for being the very ones who provide the jobs and the money for the middle and lower class.

A Conservative believes that America needs minimum government, not a minimum wage. We desire market-driven wages that reward hard work, not government-imposed mediocrity.

Conservatives recognize that CEO salaries should be governed by the free market, where the money comes from, not by a government that has nothing to do with the production of that money. We also understand that a government that feels they have the right to go after CEO salaries may someday come after my salary. With this belief, will some CEO's be overpaid? Maybe – but I stand with Thomas Jefferson when he said, "I would rather be exposed to the inconveniences attending too much liberty than to those attending too small a degree of it."

Conservatives believe that all life, even pre-born life, is incredibly precious, and in the big picture, when we devalue life in the womb, we slowly devalue all of life. And life is not something to be taken lightly. An ethical and moral humanity should be protecting life at all cost, not destroying it for the sake, in so many cases, of convenience.

Though perhaps not universal, I believe that a Conservative recognizes that the fact that we've had no terrorist attacks since 2001 is directly related to President Bush's tough stand on terror and his swift and decisive action to bring freedom to Iraq.

Conservatives understand that the First Amendment grants all Americans freedom **of** religion, not freedom **from** religion in public, and that the separation of church and state, a phrase not even in the Constitution, has been distorted by the ACLU and others beyond recognition from its original purpose.

Conservatives recognize that the Fairness Doctrine, which attempts to govern the airwaves, is completely absurd and unnecessary in a free market system that will, by its very nature, bring all the fairness needed.

Conservatism recognizes that welfare in the hands of a massive bureaucracy like the federal Government is pretty much a wasteful disaster waiting to happen and that the true answer to the needy is for the government to get out of the way and out of our pockets and let good-hearted Americans and generous businesses keep more of their money to help those who need it – in a much more efficient, effective, and accountable manner than the government ever could. We would be so much better off if we remembered this one principle that should govern welfare: Our goal in America should **not** be to provide better welfare; it should be for our economy to grow to the healthy point where we don't need welfare.

You see, Conservatives believe that compassion is not defined by what we're required to send the government to care for the needy but by what we're willing to give, out of our own spirit of caring and out of our knowledge of the needs around us.

Conservatives recognize that Government doesn't exist to fill in the gaps where individuals fail. It exists only to carry out the functions that can't be fully handled by individuals.

Conservatives understand that Health Care is not a fundamental right because a true right doesn't impose on others an obligation to pay for the right. Americans don't need government controlling the health care industry; it needs the government to get out of the way and out of our wallets so more and

more Americans can afford health care in an already fantastic health care system that simply needs some market-driven adjusting.

A Conservative believes that diversity and equality are not defined by government or business establishing quotas of acceptance but by encouraging a level playing field so all qualified people have an equal opportunity to prove their excellence.

Conservatives understand the value of Patriotism and recognize that to bend our principles and requirements to accommodate illegals is to slowly, gradually watch those principles, and the freedoms which have under girded them through the years, seep away into oblivion to the point where the very foundation of who we are as a nation – a foundation that drew those millions of immigrants here in the first place – is a distant memory. The words of Thomas Paine ring very true: “Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom must...undergo the fatigue of supporting it.”

Finally, Conservatives recognize that our founding fathers understood that America was great because its people were great. So, they designed a limited government that, for the most part, got out of the way of these great people. They knew that to step into their lives too much was to limit the expression and development of that greatness. I pray our leaders get back to recognizing the truth that Ronald Reagan embraced, that “Man is not free unless government is limited.”

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