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Paul Ryan Urges GOP to Tether Populist Energy to Conservative Principles

Former Speaker of the House kicks off new speaker series by warning conservatives against engaging in identity politics or depending on populist appeal of one personality

WASHINGTON, DC -- Calling his political outlook fundamentally “Reagan conservative,” former U.S. House Speaker Paul Ryan outlined a future course for the Republican Party which combines recent populist energy with the core principles of conservatism.

Speaker Ryan's speech was the first in the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation & Institute's new Time for Choosing speaker series, which invites leading intellectuals, current and former Members of Congress, governors and emerging 2024 presidential candidates to discuss fundamental questions facing the GOP. Speakers are asked to discuss the party's successes and failures and the policies and philosophies which will reinvent the Republican Party as a true and modern conservative party with ideas deserving of the support of the American people.

Ryan's speech sent a strong warning to conservatives that bowing to “woke” culture and falling into the trap of identity politics is “antithetical to Reagan conservatism” and will ultimately lead to failure. He discussed this and the formula for the GOP to win back voters and sustain governing majorities in remarks delivered at the newly-reopened Reagan Library in Simi Valley, CA.

A copy of Speaker Ryan's speech can be found [HERE](#). Below are additional highlights from his remarks.

Paul Ryan on the GOP's Crossroads

"So once again, we conservatives find ourselves at a crossroads. And here's one reality we have to face. If the conservative cause depends on the populist appeal of one personality, or on second-rate imitations, then we're not going anywhere. Voters looking for Republican leaders want to see independence and mettle. They will not be impressed by the sight of yes-men and flatterers flocking to Mar-a-Lago."

"For conservatives, this painful existence as the opposition can actually be an opportunity. Out of these years can come a healthy, growing, and united conservative movement . . . a movement that speaks again to the heart of a great nation."

Paul Ryan on Democrats in Power

"As we watch progressives work every lever of power in the elected branches, we'll have all the reminders we need of why conservatives believe in limited government, spending discipline, economic opportunity, pluralism, and personal freedom."

"In 2020, the country wanted a nice guy who would move to the center and depolarize our politics. Instead, we got a nice guy pursuing an agenda more leftist than any president in my lifetime. These policies might have the full approval of his progressive supporters, but they break faith with the middle-of-the-road folks who made the difference for him on Election Day."

"Listening to the progressive left sometimes, you can easily overlook the irreplaceable role of families, churches, and communities in shaping the character of our country. For the left, it's always about expanding government power. And no matter how much they get, it's never enough."

Paul Ryan on Former President Trump's Accomplishments and Failures

"These historic reforms were a triumph of practical conservative policy . . . a model of the shared prosperity and upward mobility we have always talked about. It was the populism of President Trump in action, tethered to conservative principles. And if anyone wondered back in January 2020 what could possibly cut short this expansion of opportunity in America, we now know the one-word answer: pandemic... That calamity, along with some fiascos of the president's own making, set the scene for our present challenges."

Paul Ryan on Identity Politics

"What we could once dismiss as pretentious academic theory, confined to overworked dissertations and obscure journals, somehow has become Democratic Party orthodoxy. Everything has to be about race, gender, and class. Every person is just a stand-in for one group interest or another. That's identity politics – constantly accusing, suspecting, claiming victimhood, pulling us apart from one another. And lately, all of this has gone from ideology to obsession."

"We conservatives have to be careful not to get caught up in every little cultural battle... Culture matters, yes, but our party must be defined by more than a tussle over the latest grievance or perceived slight. We must not let them take priority over solutions – grounded in principle – to improve people's lives... And we need to be frank: Today, too many people on the right are enamored with identity politics in ways that are antithetical to Reagan conservatism."

Paul Ryan on the Media

"It turns out there is a huge audience of men and women with minds of their own, who know the difference between being informed and being indoctrinated. Who doubts that this audience will only expand, as more Americans seek escape from the liberal echo chamber of the establishment media?"

Paul Ryan on America's Creed

"How many times did we hear the namesake of this Library remind us that America isn't just a place on the map, defined by blood and soil – it's an idea. America is humanity's best attempt at upholding the truth that everyone is created equal – that the condition of your birth need not dictate the whole course of your life."

Additional confirmed speakers include former Vice President Mike Pence (June 24), former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo (July 26), former UN Ambassador Nikki Haley, Senator Tom Cotton, Senator Tim Scott and *Wall Street Journal* Columnist Peggy Noonan.

For more information on the Time for Choosing speaker series, visit:

www.thetimeforchoosing.com.

About the Reagan Foundation and Institute:

The Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute is the sole nonprofit organization created by President Reagan charged with continuing his legacy and sharing his principles - individual liberty, economic opportunity, global democracy and national pride. The Foundation is a non-partisan organization which sustains the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum in Simi Valley, CA, the Reagan Center for Public Affairs, the Presidential Learning Center, The Air Force One Pavilion, the award-winning Discovery Center and the Reagan Institute, which carries out the Foundation's mission in Washington, D.C. The Reagan Library houses over 55 million pages of Gubernatorial, Presidential and personal papers and over 60,000 gifts and artifacts chronicling the lives of Ronald and Nancy Reagan. It also serves as the final resting place of America's 40th President and his First Lady. www.reaganfoundation.org

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