

Republicans and the Recall



Hiram Johnson's gift to California

Five veteran political writers and Party leaders consider, from a variety of perspectives, the question: How should Republicans approach the October 7 recall election? The authors, in order of appearance, are Rush Limbaugh, Assemblyman John Campbell, Senator H.L. Richardson, ret., William E. Simon, Jr., and Shawn Steel. Under the heading "Equal Time," CPR reprints portions relevant to the recall of Senator Dianne Feinstein's August 6 announcement that she would not run (page 22).

RUSH LIMBAUGH CALIFORNIA NEEDS CONSERVATISM

Listening to some Republicans and conservatives on the possibility of winning the California governorship lately has been dismaying. "We don't really want to win this race. California is in such a mess it can't be fixed and we will be tagged as failures if we try. Let the Democrats continue to stew in their mess." Or a variation on this theme: "Whoever wins will not have a mandate so he/she will not be able to govern, especially with the huge Democrat majorities in the California Legislature."

We conservatives didn't get where we are today with

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this kind of thinking and we can't lead in the future with this attitude.

California is a liberal proving-ground run amok. Its crushing debt — resulting from years of pandering to unions, bureaucrats, illegal immigrants, environmentalists, and trial lawyers — has led to huge tax increases, major cuts in basic services, a reduction in the state's credit rating, brown-outs, water shortages, and a large exodus of citizens from the state.

None of this decay is surprising. The left's promises of Nirvana never measure up. But what does surprise me are the reactions of some conservatives who see California's problems as so severe that they can't be solved by the application of conservative principles. Their thinking has led them to support Arnold Schwarzenegger, who, to my knowledge, has yet to embrace any conservative positions, though he has embraced Warren Buffett. *Hasta la vista*, whatever.

There's no better time to advance conservative principles than when they're most needed. And California needs a large dose of conservatism. Recent history should be our guide.

During the presidency of Jimmy Carter, inflation, unemployment, and interest rates were double-digit. OPEC held sway over the U.S. economy. In the dead of winter, Mr. Carter urged Americans to lower thermostats, wear sweaters, and sleep with an extra blanket. He lectured the public to lower its expectations, and

spoke of a "malaise" in which he blamed Americans for his own leadership failures.

America's predicament was no better abroad. Communism was on the march in Afghanistan, Nicaragua, and Angola. The United States lost a key ally in Iran, eventually resulting in a disgraceful hostage crisis lasting 444 days.

What conservative would want to be president under these dire circumstances, right? Well, of course, we know that Ronald Reagan wanted the job. He espoused unequivocally conservative principles and policies. He was confident that strong leadership, free enterprise, limited government, tax cuts, and a strong defense were the solutions. And most of all, he believed in the inherent character and fortitude of the American people. He understood that it was freedom, the natural yearning of the human spirit, that propelled people to pursue excellence — so long as government obstacles were swept aside. Mr. Reagan's often-expressed optimism and confidence in the American people was infectious and inspired millions of Americans to attack a recession and defeat it.

Within hours of his inauguration, President Reagan froze federal hiring. He also deregulated oil prices, which weakened OPEC's grip — increasing supply and lowering costs. Moreover, fearing Ronald Reagan's wrath, the Iranian regime released its American hostages.

During the first summer of his presidency, Mr. Reagan forced through Congress, including a Democrat-controlled House, the most broad-based and significant tax cut in American history, thereby unleashing unprecedented economic prosperity for the next two decades. Who would have thought that possible?

And at the same time, the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization ordered its membership to strike illegally, in hopes of shutting down air travel in an effort to force Mr. Reagan to meet its demands. The president's response to this blackmail: Within 48 hours he fired nearly 70 percent of the strikers, and he had Patco decertified.

Mr. Reagan's conservatism didn't end at the water's edge. Despite enormous opposition from congressional Democrats, he pushed back the Soviet Union on all fronts. In 1983, at the height of the nuclear freeze protests, he deployed the first Pershing intermediate-range ballistic missiles in West Germany in response to the Soviet targeting of missiles at Western Europe.

In 1986, the president ordered an attack on Libya in response to its bombing of a German nightclub in which several Americans were killed, showing the world that savagery against Americans would be punished.

Mr. Reagan rebuilt the military and launched the Strategic Defense Initiative, which is not only a key as-

pect of America's present-day defense structure, but helped break the back of Soviet Communism and freed hundreds of millions imprisoned behind the Iron Curtain. No one had thought this possible either. Unfortunately, some still regret it. You know who you are.

It's important to remember that each of these bold actions was met with skepticism and derision. In fact, Mr. Reagan himself was met with the same reaction during his entire public career — including his earlier unsuccessful campaigns for the presidency. But he stuck by his principles. He believed in them. He championed them. He saw opportunity where others despaired. He saw challenges where others surrendered.

Conservatives need to learn from Ronald Reagan. They need to stop being timid, pessimistic, and insecure. California needs solutions. There is no better time and place to establish and illustrate the primacy of conservatism. True, not all of California's problems mirror those of the late '70s and '80s, but many do, particularly those that forced this recall. Now, if one man with a vision completely changed the course of a nation, why can't it happen in a single state? CFC

JOHN CAMPBELL

YES ON RECALL; YES ON ARNOLD

I am a conservative and an unabashed one at that. I believe in our principles, our cause, and the inherent ethics of our movement. And I am strongly supporting Arnold Schwarzenegger for governor. I furthermore believe that conservatives should unite in our support for Arnold and I would like to tell you why.

Even though Schwarzenegger announced his candidacy on the Jay Leno show, I have often enjoyed David Letterman's "top ten" lists. So, here is my list of "top ten reasons" why conservatives should support Arnold for governor.

#10) A Governor Schwarzenegger would have the ability to use his celebrity and unique persona to reach and attract new voters to the Republican Party.

#9) Schwarzenegger can help the president win California in 2004 (which probably guarantees him a second term) and help us to pick up seats in the state Legislature like no other candidate.

#8) After spending several days with Arnold over the

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