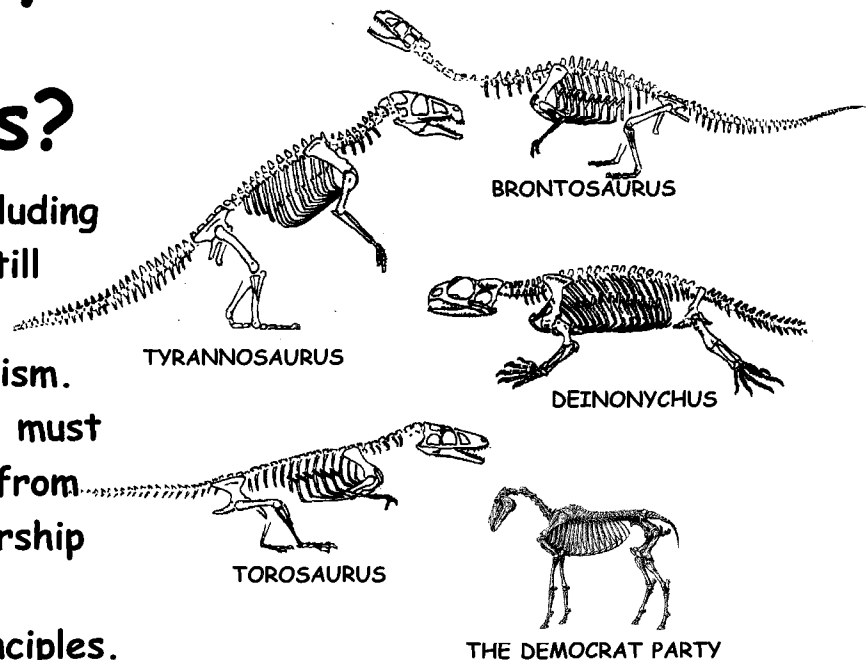


Which Party is out of step with voters?

Americans — including Californians — still reject bedrock Democrat liberalism. To win, the GOP must only free itself from 'moderate' leadership unworthy of its conservative principles.



by Gregory Sanford

A recent office clean up session produced from my archives an old *Los Angeles Times* cartoon by Paul Conrad (dated Oct. 5, 1989). It pictures, without comment, five skeletal displays, as if in an archeological museum, sequentially labeled "Brontosaurus," "Tyrannosaurus," "Deinonychus," "Torosaurus," and, last — under a donkey's skeleton — "The Democratic Party."

Such "chance" manifestations are sometimes downright spooky in their timeliness. Conrad's illustrated statement indicates the mood of liberals (of which, in case anyone out there is too young to remember, Mr. Conrad was one — up to the eyebrows) during the early H. W. Bush administration. Inasmuch as it was published only about three years before Bill Clinton's presidential victory, which removed a GOP incumbent, wisdom or prudence or both would seem to indicate caution now that similar conclusions (similarly wrong) on the demise of the Republican Party are appearing.

For instance, the Dec. 8 *San Francisco Chronicle* quoted *California Target Book* co-Editor, political analyst Tony Quinn with regard to the November election saying "There's been a broad repudiation of traditional conservative Republicans in California." Quinn's statement followed a lead sentence arguing that "Cal-

Freelance writer Gregory Sanford lives in Southern California.

ifornia Republicans have come out of the November election in danger of slipping into political irrelevance across much of the state." The *Chronicle* article goes on to cite falling GOP registration figures and slippage in legislative seats held, but Quinn's assessment ("a broad repudiation of traditional conservative Republicans") repeats the hoary Democrat/major media myth brought forward whenever the GOP takes an electoral shellacking of any kind for any reason. Proven wrong on almost every occasion, this silly notion, like the slasher-monster in all 10 installments of a Jamie Lee Curtis horror film series, simply won't be killed. It is, apparently, just too much fun bringing it back again and again and again. Nonetheless, the idea that GOP losses are traceable to conservative issue positions is, if anything, even more devoid of foundation and contrary to the facts now than it usually is.

First of all — to belabor a point that Mr. Quinn somehow keeps forgetting — the "California Republican" who, more than any other, defines the Party's image among most voters is *Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger*, a Democrat in all but name. The governor favors cave-in politics, most clearly illustrated by his enthusiasm — contradicting every element of his recall election campaign — for fiscally irresponsible government spending sprees financed by tax hikes. He opposes virtually every bedrock pro-family GOP position and

policy. His extreme opposition to Prop. 8 extends to his having urged the Supreme Court to overturn the law, ignoring the comfortable majority of California voters that supported it (8's victory margin exceeded 600,000 votes) in that very November election which, we now hear, showed "Republicans ... in danger of slipping into political irrelevance." Indeed they are, as far as the name "Schwarzenegger" defines the Party, but Schwarzenegger Republican is the polar opposite of "traditional conservative Republican." Most Californians identify the GOP with a renegade governor, a spendthrift Congress (that repeatedly dissed *its* campaign promises), a Bush administration that failed to lift a finger to reign in said Congress's budgetary (and myriad other forms of) irresponsibility, and by a presidential nominee who killed his chance for victory by backing, at a critical moment in the campaign, what now appears to be the first in a series of socialistic "bailouts." Instead of matching his conservative rhetoric of the campaign trail with conservative action when he had a chance to act, John McCain reverted to "moderate" Republican form. This is a GOP that, so far from representing conservative principles, had itself renounced them — and renounced not just the principles, but the very idea of governing according to any principles whatever. Voters, as they often will, repudiated leaders they saw as having substituted self-serving expediency for honor in office.

Incomprehensible communism

... the essence of communism is quite beyond the limits of human understanding. It is hard to believe that people could actually plan such things and carry them out. And it is precisely because its essence is beyond comprehension, perhaps, that communism is so difficult to understand.

— Alexander Solzhenitsyn, speech to the AFL-CIO, July 9, 1975

James Burnham's landmark 1964 book, one of the American conservative movement's foundational books, *Suicide of the West*, argues in its opening pages that "In the years 1917-21 most of the huge Russian Empire, under the command of the Bolsheviks, became not merely altogether separate from Western civilization but directly hostile to it in all these senses, in the moral, philosophical and religious as well as the material, political and social dimensions The new rulers understood their initial territory to be the base for the development of a wholly new civilization, distinguished absolutely not only from the West but from all preceding civilizations, and destined ultimately to incorporate the entire earth and all mankind."

As Alexander Solzhenitsyn pointed out in addressing the AFL-CIO, however, it is beyond human understanding that wise men, or any men at all, should actually reject *all* preceding civilizations, renounce *all* human experience and embark on a course to create a new man, an unknown future, a blind beginning founded on only one principle: that everything past is evil, that "everything human is alien," as David Horowitz put it in his autobiographical essay in *Destructive Generation*. The result is that few people believe that the communist idea is what it is, even as it plays out before their eyes. Barack Obama, for instance, spends his politically formative life in the care and teaching of America-hating revolutionaries like Rev. Jeremiah Wright and Bill Ayers while drawing his inspiration from Saul Alinsky. Yet the obvious lesson it teaches is simply dismissed with a sneer by Obama's Democrat rank-and-file constituency. The *major* — anything but *mainstream* — media writes it off as just so much right-wing paranoia. The idea that a man possessed by a conviction like communism could become president of the United States is simply incomprehensible, so Democrat voters give Obama a pass.

But even the most cursory scan of specific issues reveals that nearly the opposite of Tony Quinn's point is the truth. To wit: *California voters have broadly repudiated the left-wing ideas that dominate the Democrat Party in this state and nationally*. Putting it the other way, it is the *Democrats* that have shown themselves too extreme both for California and America. The media amply demonstrated the truth of this conclusion in its borderline schizophrenic message about Sarah Palin, alternating "she's a dangerous menace" with "she's a comical fool." (The word *schizophrenia* derives from a Greek phrase that means "split mind.")

California's Proposition 8 provides another illustration of the lengths to which today's Democrat leadership has declared itself hostile to our civilization in its moral, philosophical, and religious as well as material, political, and social dimensions. The proposition was passed, as is now widely known, because two key Democrat constituencies — black and Hispanic voters — supported it strongly. It passed in Los Angeles County, which, in itself, speaks volumes about how out of step, how near political irrelevance, are the Democrat hierarchy's true positions. Top Democrats believe wholeheartedly in an anti-family absolutism simply at loggerheads with the most basic ideas of two key elements of the political coalition that sustains them. Geographically, Democrats must win L.A. County to win statewide in California, and they must win California to win nationally. Yet on the bedrock issue of the fami-

ly, they lost both the county and the state. Since the election, top Democrats have desperately tried to cover their embarrassment, reminding this observer of China's pathetic communist regime during the 1989 "Beijing Spring" in Tienanmin Square that suddenly revealed the communists' irrelevance to the true aspirations of the Chinese people. With Orwellian word-mangling and black-shirt thuggery, the anti-Prop. 8 folks now commit hate crimes against Mormons and call anyone who supports the family a bigot.

What's at stake is the Democrats' high-wire act as hate-America leftists posing with ever more threadbare cover as "mainstream" politicians. They know that any uncovering of the truth that convinces rank and file Americans even to begin to consider seriously the true positions of these "leaders" sends tremors through their high wire, and that these vibrations could begin a shaking capable of toppling the whole Democrat political empire. The Obama administration's superficial backtracking on cabinet appointments and stated policy positions confirms what scarcely needs confirming: that these radicals know their political power rests on the altogether human reluctance to believe that communism could possibly be what it in fact is. They know they must continue to hide their broad aims by maintaining an outward "moderation" while pursuing their honest objectives in the background.

It is the Republicans' game to win or lose

Of all people, Tony Quinn pointed out this exact Democrat vulnerability in a 2002 *Los Angeles Times* column headlined: "A Loyal Constituency Is Restless."

.... sometimes Democrats seem biased against, and often contemptuous of, positions of the Roman Catholic hierarchy. This development could provide an opening for Republicans, which could be especially important in California, where the church-going Catholic electorate is increasingly Asian — especially Filipinos and Vietnamese — and Latino

In California, the Democratic strain with Catholic voters goes beyond the cultural clash. The party's strong stand on certain social issues puts it at odds with several official Catholic positions. Governor Gray Davis, although a Catholic, has imposed a pro-abortion-rights litmus test for his judicial appointments that goes well beyond being just pro-choice. The Democratic Party strongly opposed Proposition 22, a successful measure on the 2000 ballot that defined marriage as a union between a man and a woman, while Catholic bishops, citing the church's traditional teaching, supported it.

With Prop. 8, this reality/perception disconnect played out precisely as Quinn explained it, providing an

opportunity for the conservative position. It could play out in the same way many more times in the future, as it has in the past, with regard to electoral candidates — provided Democrats don't re-think their anti-family, anti-religion positions, which no one expects them to do. The game is thus in Republicans' hands to win or lose. They lose, as we've just witnessed for the umpteenth time, when they entrust their Party to timid, "moderate" leadership, leaders who often share powerful Democrats' contempt for family and religion.

They win, as we saw most dramatically with Ronald Reagan and, just now, with Sarah Palin and the timely appearance of Joe the Plumber, when Republicans choose genuinely conservative leaders, symbols, and messages: limited government, respect for America's bedrock social and governing institutions, and so forth. If this point needs confirmation, it is supplied by Democrats' frantic efforts to smear Joe the Plumber and Palin. It is also evident in their giddy Camelot campaign to imbue the Obama administration with a positively gnostic aura as some sort of second coming: "The Age of Aquarius" revisited, Woodstock Nation, Haight-Ashbury forever. For the hard left, the Obama presidency is shaping up as a second childhood reversion to the 1960s. Love and peace, brother.

But the American people, even Californians, are not there, brother. Look at the phenomenal ease with which voters, with gas prices skyrocketing, disposed of their opposition to oil exploration and drilling. The vaunted environmental issue's power to bring proud politicians to their knees became, in a flash, a vanishing vapor. Voters wanted to drill now and drill wherever the energy sources are. So much for going green.

How about redistributing the wealth? No, nobody really wants that. As Newt Gingrich pointed out shortly before the election, "By 60 to 20 percent, Americans believe lower taxes, not higher government spending, will best ensure economic recovery, according to a new Fox News/Opinion Dynamics poll. By 86 to 9 percent, Americans believe government should focus on jobs and economic growth over income redistribution, according to a New Models/Winston Group survey. By 71 to 25 percent, Americans believe that if you cut taxes on small business it will create new jobs, according to the New Models/Winston Group poll."

Nobody really supports Democrat enthusiasm for activist judges, for eliminating religion from the public square, or for denying ourselves perfectly good energy sources as we try to protect the environment (within rational limits — *i.e.*, recalling that we still must *live* on

the planet, a point the anti-human left strongly, although rarely explicitly, disputes). Nobody shares Obama's or other Democrat leaders' refusal to admit that the surge worked. And nobody is willing to risk an Iraq blood bath reminiscent of Pol Pot, though that's what would come if we cut and run as the Reid-Polosi Democrats have urged doing for years. On issues, the Obama Democrats, not "traditional conservative Republicans," have been repudiated time and again.

So why do Democrats win?

But Democrats won the election. Why? The first answer is found in *Republican* leadership so flounderingly moderate that it cannot be trusted to govern significantly differently from Democrats. It is leadership voters cannot trust. The second answer is conservative failure to rally around leaders who in fact are solid conservatives *and* who, in addition to that, can capture the imagination of the people, build coalitions, and win elections. This second reason explains the first. Had winning conservatives been found following Reagan's departure, the GOP would never have fallen under the control of always-ready-to-compromise moderates.

The Palin phenomenon indicates that this problem may be a problem no longer. As her stunning success in helping Saxby Chamblis win in Georgia again proved, she clearly possesses to an extraordinary degree the ability, essential to winning elections, to engage the electorate. But perhaps the best indication that the GOP leadership gap is being filled is the left's apoplectic reaction to Palin, which if anything has grown more strident since Obama's victory. The one sure way to build a fire under these folks is to threaten their power and they know when someone represents such a threat. Their incessant attacks prove that Sarah Palin does exactly that. Other conservative lights also appear on the horizon, Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal, for instance. No one but Palin, however, has so far demonstrated the popular qualities necessary to win. So, for now at least, my money is riding with her.

Building coalitions through issues

The last piece of the puzzle for Republicans is to build winning coalitions by making effective use of their already popular issue positions, positions consistent both with bedrock conservative principle and America's founding ideas. A lot of conservatives, for instance, handled the outbreak of bailout fever poorly. Persuasive arguments may have existed for supporting — as *policy* — at least some sort of initial bailout of the financial institutions. I don't know. I heard no such arguments, but I know a lot of conservatives backed something like the so-called solution that eventually

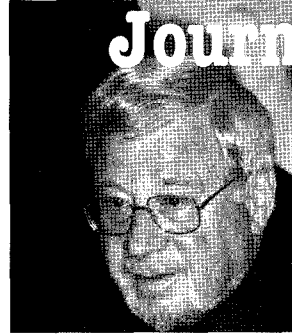
passed. But regardless of the bailouts' standing as policy, as *politics* Republicans had no business touching this fiasco with a ten-foot poll. McCain would probably argue that a time comes to put aside personal and partisan interests and serve the country. But — skipping for now the question of whether the bailouts do, in fact, serve the country — the country can *never* be served by trying to force through policies devoid of popular support. Then it is wiser to return to fight another day. As to the bailouts, almost no part of the GOP coalition supported them and the way they were handled virtually insured that they would insult and/or injure every part of that coalition.

Prop. 8 and the Hispanic/black vote provide an excellent opportunity for effective political use of Republican positions on issues. The opportunity, of course, is to build bridges into a growing community of voters, to divide two base Democrat constituencies, and to illustrate the broad hypocrisy, pandering, and sheer deceit at the core of Democrat politics on family issues (in this regard, Elton John has virtually drawn up, in *Ten Easy Lessons*, how Republicans should talk about this issue). Conferences, meetings of leaders, get-to-know one another events should be organized to discuss and defend the shared pro-family positions behind the successful passage of this initiative. The bald opportunism, arrogance, and contempt for democratic process behind the courtroom attack on Prop. 8 (leading up to a dramatic state Supreme Court ruling sometime early next year) provide a crucial deadline to lend such an effort both a sense of urgency and a timeline for action. Every element is present to begin the long, necessary process of making permanent, GOP coalition building inroads among pro-family Hispanic and black voters — inroads that would, in time, yield the votes California Republicans must have to become competitive once more in statewide politics. Without those votes, the GOP may well become the irrelevant element the *Chronicle* predicts. But with them, the Democrats stand to lose their stranglehold on Los Angeles County and with it, the state. At that point, dare we think it? Democrats cease to be a national political force.

It could happen. The opportunity is there. Seizing it, however, will require replacing today's timid, self-serving GOP leaders with principled, *popular* conservatives like Sarah Palin and deploying the power of conservative ideas and policy positions wisely to build election-winning coalitions. Conrad's 1989 cartoon may reappear sooner than we think.

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Si Frumkin's Journal



Another mysterious charity puzzle

About two years ago I wrote "The Charity Puzzle," an article on the way Americans donate. I had just finished a fascinating book, *Who Really Cares?*, by Professor Arthur Brooks, that analyzed American charity donors by different religions, political views, age, and income. It showed that liberals gave much less than conservatives, that the religious were much more generous than the secular, that the elderly gave more than the young, and that the rich gave a smaller percentage of their income than those who earned less than \$50,000 a year. (If you are interested in knowing more, write me at P.O. Box 1542, Studio City, CA 91614, and I will send you a copy of the article)

Intrigued, I went international, dug through the Internet, and learned that Americans give incomparably more than other nations. We give 1.7 percent of our GDP, more than twice that of the second-place United Kingdom with 0.73 percent, followed by other English-speaking countries with 0.7 percent, several Europeans with 0.5 percent, and, in last place, France with just one-tenth of one percent.

There were no really impressive reasons for the differences. I ended my article by remarking, snidely, that it looked as if the stingiest person in the world had to be a rich, liberal, French atheist less than 35 years old.

I didn't think much about this subject in the subsequent two years. I kept on writing my own charity checks, bugged others to support and contribute

Si Frumkin is publisher and editor of Graffiti for Intellectuals.