

Our best hope of relimiting government is, as Amherst College professor Hadley Arkes is fond of saying, to start using principles we didn't even know we had.

*Sally C. Pipes is the president of the Pacific Research Institute, in San Francisco.*

— John H. Fund —

At the presidential level, Republicans proved in 1996 that you can't beat the Michael Jordan of political candidates with a tired Washington insider whose communication skills predated television, or even radio. At the congressional level, Republicans demonstrated they still have a chance to become a true majority party if they can convince Americans they are problem solvers and not merely stingy accountants obsessed with shrinking the federal fisc. We live in a post-partisan environment where it is difficult for a party to retain brand-name loyalty. Exit polls and the outcomes of various popular initiatives show the electorate often supports Republican solutions so long as they aren't identified with the GOP (as when Californians rejected higher tax rates on the rich while backing color-blind government).

Republicans need to show they really are for smaller government by abolishing the scandal-ridden Department of Commerce. Not only is the agency a slush fund for corporate welfare, but it also exemplifies the heart of campaign-finance scandals, which is the power of Washington to direct economic outcomes. Conservatives must also push to expand the concept of medical savings accounts that got a foot in the health-care door last year. The failures of the 104th Congress were writ in stone the day the Republicans decided not to take control of the Congressional Budget Office and Joint Tax Committee and adjust the ways they calculate budgetary and tax issues. They will continue to limit their liability to govern to the extent they leave the Congressional number-crunchers alone.

I worry that Republicans will try to bridge the gender gap by throwing many of their long-held principles into it. It's one thing to rethink how best to communicate why a smarter, smaller government can improve women's lives. It's quite another to buy Bill Clinton's salami-slice increases in state power because they fear the wrath of soccer moms and waitress moms. A majority of white women and married women voted Republican for Congress. There is no reason for panic on gender.

Unions—especially the teacher-monopolies that control public education—must be confronted. The last election proved they can't be

placated. Congressional hearings and commissions must subpoena their records and expose how they spend their money. If just some of their members begin to publicly question where their dues are going, the unions' effectiveness in the 1998 elections and beyond can be curbed.

Finally, the GOP Congress must work even more closely with the 32 Republican governors to fashion legislation. Whether they cooperate and present a unified message to voters in the 1998 elections will dictate in large part if Republicans can cement and extend their grassroots gains.

*John H. Fund is a member of the editorial board of the Wall Street Journal and a contributor to MSNBC.*

— John C. Goodman —

Two years ago, the Democratic Party was imploding. Democrats were losing elections almost everywhere. They even lost mayoral elections in Los Angeles, New York City, and Jersey City—places where there virtually are no Republicans. They had no platform and no agenda. They still have no platform and no agenda. Yet in 1996 they retained the White House, ran credible races for the U.S. House and Senate and gained 96 seats in state legislatures. How did this happen?

There are three lessons for the GOP: (1) Message trumps no message; (2) at the margin, the female vote can be won with rhetoric and small policy changes; and (3) a new kind of strategic liberalism has emerged from the Democrats' desperate attempt to regain power.

**Message.** When Americans entered the voting booths last November 5, everyone remembered the Democratic message: Republicans want to cut spending for Medicare, Medicaid, and education in order to lower taxes on the rich. Very few people could remember Bob Dole's message. Why? A simple idea repeated over and over again is easily remembered, whereas complex ideas, each explained in many different ways, are not.

**Gender Gap.** In the congressional elections, men favored Republicans by 9 percentage points; women favored Democrats by 10 points. Among suburbanites, men favored Republicans by 12 points; women favored Democrats by 6.

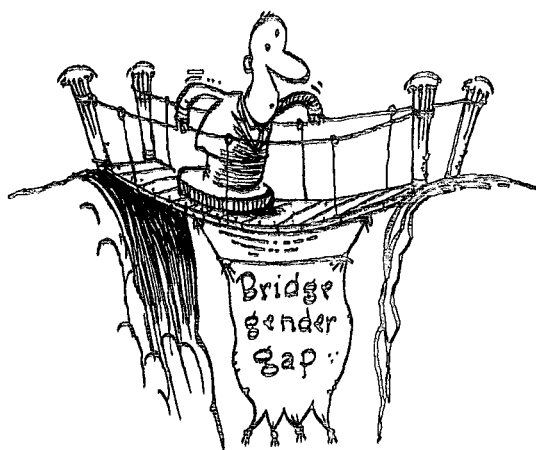
**Congress should hold hearings and issue subpoenas to expose how labor unions spend their members' dues.**

—John H. Fund

Thus the gender gap can hurt either party. But Republicans must nevertheless be concerned. In 1996, many women who ordinarily might be expected to vote Republican (and whose husbands vote Republican) voted for a Democrat instead—perhaps supplying the margin of victory in many races. This tendency has deepened over time. Between 1992 and 1994, the preference for congressional Democrats grew from 6 to 10 percentage points among all women and switched from 6 points for Republicans to 6 points for Democrats among suburban women.

What explains the gender gap? Apart from differences between the two parties over abortion, Democratic candidates repeatedly used the words “children” and “education” at their convention and in their campaigns, and addressed other issues of special concern to women. By all rights, candidates who are beholden to teachers unions should not be viewed as friends of children. Yet Bill Clinton successfully campaigned as the pro-education candidate. By contrast, Bob

## PASS FAMILY TAX RELIEF



Dole’s plan to abolish the U.S. Department of Education made him seem hostile to education.

Clinton promised more money for breast cancer research and Internet access in all schools. He signed legislation to allow women to stay in the hospital for two days after childbirth. (In focus groups, women indicated that the two-day mandate was one of the most important reasons why they preferred Clinton.) President Clinton and Democratic congressional candidates also highlighted issues over which the federal government has virtually no control, such as school uniforms and report cards for schools.

**Strategic Liberalism.** President Clinton may have declared that “the era of Big Government is over,” but focus groups reveal that people do not equate health-insurance mandates with “Big

Government.” In this and in other areas, liberals have discovered that they can expand the power of government incrementally without appearing to be liberal, and can often woo women voters at the same time.

During the campaign, the president demonstrated his capacity to advance ideas inconsistent with his own past positions and inimical to key constituencies in order to gain electoral advantage. The mandate for two-day hospital stays is a perfect example. It is completely inconsistent with the HillaryCare plan of 1993, which sought to encourage everyone to join health maintenance organizations (HMOs) and to allow health-care specialists to make such decisions based on medical needs and cost effectiveness. The mandate also goes against the president’s managed competition constituency.

This is a new kind of liberalism. The old liberalism was special-interest liberalism. One could predict the agenda of old liberalism based on the demands of its special-interest constituents. Strategic liberalism is much harder to predict. Counterstrategies are much harder to devise. Moreover, since strategic liberalism involves a new way of thinking, initiatives could come from younger members of Congress rather than the leadership. Expect strategic liberals to begin the 105th Congress with mandates of special interest to women: annual mammograms with no deductible; no deductible for mastectomies; annual pap smears with no deductible; checkups for children with no deductible.

The onslaught will continue, as special interests descend on the Capitol: chiropractors, naturopaths, acupuncturists, *in vitro* fertilization centers, et cetera. At the same time, the administration will push for KidCare—Hillary Clinton’s health-care plan adapted for children.

**Conservative Response.** The conservative response to traditional liberalism has been a completely defensive strategy: resist and retreat, resist and retreat. This would be a disastrous response to strategic liberalism. Conservatives would die a death of a thousand cuts. After two years, marginal voters would come to believe that only liberal Democrats care about health care for women and children.

The conservative counterstrategy must couple the traditional commitment to such “conservative” issues as lower taxes, deregulation, and privatization with a focus on such “liberal” concerns as health, education, environment, pensions, and other issues of interest to women. In each area, conservatives must offer an aggressive, free-enterprise agenda for solving problems.

*John C. Goodman is the president of the National Center for Policy Analysis, based in Dallas and Washington, D.C.*