



Chairman Reince Priebus
C/O Republican National Committee
310 First Street, SE
Washington, DC 20003

April 8, 2013

Dear Chairman Priebus,

We write to express our great displeasure with the RNC commissioned report titled *Growth and Opportunity Project*. As individuals and organizations which represent millions of grassroots, faith-based voters who have supported (politically and financially) thousands of Republican candidates who share our values, we write to say:

The Republican Party makes a huge historical mistake if it intends to dismantle this coalition by marginalizing social conservatives and avoiding the issues which attract and energize them by the millions.

Unfortunately, the report dismisses the Reagan Coalition as a political relic of the past. It's important to remember that from 1932-1980, the Republican Party was a permanent minority party. Political debate was confined to economic issues like the expansion of the Federal Government, taxes, and national security.

It was not until 1980 with key changes in the GOP Platform and the nomination of Ronald Reagan that social conservatives were clearly invited to be an important addition to this coalition. Millions of "Reagan Democrats" voted not only for President Ronald Reagan, but became active in supporting other GOP candidates who shared their faith-based family values. That's how Republicans achieved many successes since 1980 at every level of government.

The report states on page seven that "America looks different." It certainly does, but **here are some facts about minority outreach...not opinions and theories from DC Consultants:**

1. In 2004, President Bush carried Ohio because of the outreach to African-American pastors supporting a traditional marriage amendment on the ballot.
2. Bush received more than 16% of the African-American vote in Ohio that year which played a key role in his Ohio and presidential victories.
3. A 2012 referendum on same-sex marriage in Maryland lost, but received 5% more of the vote than Mitt Romney.
4. Today in Illinois, despite a massive 74-47 Democrat majority in the Illinois House, **a bill to pass same-sex marriage has been stalled because of successful, meaningful outreach by social conservatives to black and Hispanic pastors.**

Minority outreach, to be successful, needs to be personal and genuine. It needs to focus on issues where there is mutual agreement like traditional marriage, vouchers, and abortion. That's how relationships are formed and trust is built to work together to elect candidates who support these issues.

It is the faith-based community which offers Republicans their best hope of expanding their support in these groups. Going “vanilla” or even changing long held positions would quickly end this opportunity.

Page eight of the report makes what we believe to be two contradictory statements about gay rights. First:

There is generational difference within the conservative movement about issues involving the treatment and the rights of gays – and for many younger voters, these issues are a gateway into whether the Party is a place they want to be.

The next paragraph contradicts this statement by saying:

...just because someone disagrees with us on 20% of the issues, that does not mean we cannot come together on the rest of the issues where we do agree.

We agree with the final statement and disagree with the first. Many homosexuals are active in the GOP because they agree with Republicans on economic issues. The fact that the Party is strongly committed to traditional marriage has not prevented their involvement through GOProud or Log Cabin Republicans. **We deeply resent the insinuation that we have treated homosexuals unkindly personally.**

And we would like to point out that in the four blue states where voters narrowly voted for same sex marriage in 2012, Mitt Romney, who refused to discuss the issue, lost by an average of five points more than the state initiatives to preserve marriage.

Republicans would do well to persuade young voters why marriage between a man and a woman is so important rather than abandon thousands of years of wisdom to please them.

We believe that part of the 2012 failure was caused by the over concentration of funds by Republicans in paid media and a lack of attention to the “ground game.” And we would note that successful ground games in the past have been driven by the passion of social conservatives.

Amazingly, there is no reference to the 2012 Platform in this document. **It’s one thing to say the Party is open to all. It’s quite another to suggest that the Party should retreat in midstream from their own platform. In so doing, the GOP further confuses voters about their own identity.**

The GOP needs fewer consultants and more communication of positions that distinguish the Party clearly from Democrats on the economy, social issues and national security.

Finally, real and respectful communication is needed with our organizations. Alleged gaffes by candidates in 2012 on social issues could have been avoided if Party leadership had consulted us, the experts on how to articulate those positions.

The Republican Party has flourished because it is truly a reflection not of Washington, D.C., but of the values of Americans across this great country.

We respectfully warn GOP Leadership that an abandonment of its principles will necessarily result in the abandonment of our constituents to their support. We could not change that even if we wished to.

As a gesture of good faith and an affirmation of its positions, we strongly recommend that the RNC meeting in Los Angeles on April 9th pass a resolution reaffirming its support of the 2012 National GOP Platform adopted in Tampa.

Sincerely,

Co-Signers

Gary Bauer, President, American Values

Tony Perkins, President, Family Research Council

Paul Caprio, Director, Family-Pac Federal

Sandy Rios, VP of Government Affairs, Family-Pac Federal

Marjorie Dannenfelser, President, Susan B. Anthony List

Austin Ruse, President, Catholic Family & Human Rights Institute

Dr. James Dobson, President and Founder, Family Talk Action

Phyllis Schlafly, President, Eagle Forum

Andrea Lafferty, President, Traditional Values Coalition

Rev. Louis P. Sheldon, Founder, Traditional Values Coalition

Tom Minnery, President, CitizenLink

Tim Wildmon, President, American Family Association

William J. Murray, Chairman, Religious Freedom Coalition