Why My Party Is the Best Choice for Jewish Voters

Published by

Schnur, Dan.
American Politics and the Jewish Community: Jewish Role in American Life, Volume 11.
Purdue University Press, 2013.
Project MUSE. muse.jhu.edu/book/47052.

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Matthew Brooks

The Republican Party is the party of Abraham Lincoln and Ronald Reagan, of Jack Kemp, Max Fisher (founder of the Republican Jewish Coalition) and Eric Cantor. Their principles and the policies derived from them are the best expressions of the American ideal. Their party, my party, is the best home for all Americans, but perhaps especially for Jewish-Americans.

The Republican Party’s core principles of individual freedom—economic liberty, responsibility for one’s neighbors who are poor, elderly, or suffering, the vital importance of strong families and strong communities—all of these resonate deeply with Jewish voters, because they are based on Jewish values. Jewish tradition teaches that every individual has free will, that supporting those in need is a personal and communal obligation, and that the highest form of tzedaka (righteousness) is helping someone earn an independent living. With these ideas in mind, the Republican Party seeks to solve the problems of our day with policies that safeguard our freedoms, both personal and economic, that promote family and community, and that address problems at the nearest level (local or state) whenever possible.

Our founding fathers warned against allowing too much power to rest in one area of government. They set up a system of federal checks and balances, instituted a bicameral legislature, and put great emphasis on the role of the states. And yet time and again, there have been efforts to collect power in the hands of a few and let those few make choices for the people, distribute benefits to the people, and take resources from the people in order to do so.
If we remain true to the core principles outlined above, we can see how our economic policies should be directed. For example, by increasing freedom in economic activity, we promote growth and prosperity for all.

**ECONOMIC FREEDOM**

Jack Kemp was an inspiring public servant. He was a mentor of mine, and I am proud to have worked with him. His pro-growth, pro-trade ideas came from a profound belief that free markets benefit minorities and the poor by enlarging the economic pie. He looked for ways to bring more jobs, more opportunities, and more economic freedom to people in the inner cities. His eye was always on making it easier for someone to find work and rise out of poverty or grow their business and benefit the whole community.

One way we can do that today is to remove impediments to hiring. Regulations, rising health care costs, uncertainty about taxes, and extraordinarily slow economic growth hurt small and large businesses alike and prevent them from expanding and hiring. Health care is a particularly important issue. Obamacare has already begun to raise costs, hurt job creation, limit access to care, and take away choices from doctors and patients. We need health care reforms that maintain the necessary safety net for those in need while using market forces to keep prices down. We need reforms that preserve the relationship between doctors and patients, promote more choices and more accountability in health care, and make health insurance affordable, portable, and continuous. Republicans have developed plans to do just that.

It is also imperative that we reform areas of ineffective and bloated government spending. One thing the sequester has shown is that, when there is a real will to cut back on government spending, there are ways to do so without hurting vital services. With a little flexibility and accountability, government can shed wasteful spending and focus on its proper functions. We must cut spending; our current deficits and increasing foreign-owned debt cannot continue.
THE FIGHT FOR FREEDOM
The Founding Fathers rebelled against the tyranny of a king. Later American leaders fought against slavery, Nazism, and communism. In each generation, freedom is threatened. Our country’s strength defends not only American citizens, but free people around the world. Our vigilance and willingness to fight for freedom must never waver.

Unfortunately, they have wavered in recent years, with the result that the US has been weakened in the eyes of our allies and our enemies. From Great Britain to Russia to China to Egypt, respect for the United States has fallen around the world. I am a Republican because my party stands for a principled policy that puts America’s national interests first and that projects American diplomatic, economic, and if absolutely necessary, military strength to protect those interests.

Iran is a special cause for concern. The threat that a nuclear Iran poses is immense—for the United States, for our allies, and for stability in a key strategic region of the world. Time is running out, talk has failed, and it is imperative that the US be willing and able to keep every option open for preventing a nuclear Iran. Leading Democrats see diplomacy as the key to American power. Republicans know that in the face of enemies, who are sincerely and irrevocably dedicated to the destruction of our country, talk is not enough. A strong military and the will to project power are essential to our security.

Terrorism continues to be the primary tactic of one of the world’s greatest threats—especially terrorism promoted by the purveyors of radical, jihadist Islam. The US must use its resources to detect, deter, prevent and punish terrorist attacks against American citizens and interests. Republicans recognize that our national security needs require the gathering of intelligence, the ability to interpret it, and the will to act on it to defend our country.

THE REAL PRO-ISRAEL PARTY
In poll after poll, Republicans declare themselves in support of Israel in greater percentages than Democrats. They sympathize with Israel more and support Israel taking necessary action to defend the Jewish State. At the grassroots as well as in the halls of government, Israel can count on Republicans to stand in its support. Republicans view Israel as a friend who shares our values and a partner who shares many of our strategic interests and goals. We respect Israel's
independence and capabilities and seek ways to work together for our common good, not to dictate a set of terms based in a certain ideological mindset.

AN OPEN DOOR
As a people whose culture emphasizes education, critical thinking, debate, and truth-seeking, Jews are also particularly attuned to the lessons of history, to problem solving, and to the value of debunking myths. The Republican Party offers ideals and policies that look squarely at problems and look for the most effective, least intrusive, and most beneficial solutions. The Republican Party is the party that ended slavery in this country, that supported civil rights legislation, and that offers every American the security, the opportunity, and the freedom to pursue their dreams.

The traditional allegiance to Democrats in the Jewish community is fading. In four of the last five presidential election cycles, Republicans increased their share of the Jewish vote with the Jewish vote in 2012 increasing by fifty percent over 2008. Republicans continue to get more and more of the Jewish vote on the state and local levels as well. I expect that trend to continue in the future.

On a personal note, in my thirty years in politics I have always found the door of the GOP to be open to Jews. Our community is welcomed and appreciated in the party. The Republican Party has deep roots in values that are meaningful to American Jews and policies that benefit all Americans. It is time for old stereotypes and old fears about the GOP to be laid to rest.

My challenge to the Jewish community is to question the status quo, to examine the issues thoughtfully, and to make informed decisions. I firmly believe that when they step back and consider the facts, they will find that the Republican Party is the best choice for Jewish voters.