

How grassroots Republican voters should now lead in winning the White House in 2016

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All Republicans must work together respectfully and effectively to win in 2016

Clear action uniting the grassroots and establishment wings of the party in the general election must now begin. This article proposes a path going forward creating the party unity needed during the general election to win the White House in 2016.

Grassroots Republican voters must be respected for what they possess—the voting power to be the deciding factor in the 2016 general election

Today, grassroots Republican voters want the Republican presidential nominee to win the 2016 general election. However, an expectation of blind voter allegiance will be a sure-fire losing proposition. A rapidly growing percentage of grassroots Republican voters will no longer robotically vote for the Republican nominee. These voters increasingly recognize the immense political power they hold when motivated and informed. (Ask Eric Cantor.) Hence, ***unless winning the presidential election is simply not important, the Republican National Committee and the primary presidential candidates must earn these voters' support in the general election by demonstrating respect for these voters during the primaries.***

Key ground rules during the primaries and at the convention will demonstrate respect for the voters

Grassroots Republican voters must be shown respect by being “invited” to participate in the primary election process. The invitation will arise from the way the primaries and convention are undertaken. Four ground rules are needed to show respect for these voters:

- First, all candidates, including conservative candidates, must have a fair shot at winning the nomination. The Republican National Committee-led process cannot favor any candidate, any group of candidates, or primaries in selected early states.
- Second, during the primaries, the candidates and their campaign teams must:
 - o Show respect for the other candidates by avoiding personal attacks or using dirty tricks;
 - o Provide voters nationally with opportunities for access (e.g., town halls) and be responsive to their concerns and questions;
 - o Be forthcoming and unequivocal about their values and public policy positions their administration will use to govern; and,
 - o Clearly indicate support for the party's eventual nominee in the general election provided the nominee has won “fair and square”.
- Third, the votes cast by Republican primary voters in ALL states must equally count toward the selection of the nominee recognizing that this is a national primary process. This means that primaries, such as “winner-take-all” and “open”, must be changed in order to equally count all Republican primary votes towards the nomination.
- Fourth, the nominee chosen at the convention must win “fair and square” based on the totality of the primary votes cast.

From these ground rules, grassroots Republican voters will receive: (1) choice on the primary ballot; (2) candidate information needed for the voter to be able to best vote their personal values; (3) equitable

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participation in the convention nomination process, and (4) a party nominee worthy of grassroots support going into the general election.

From this respect shown by the party comes the “social compact” needed to win in November

These ground rules and the voter benefits they deliver form the basis of a social compact with these vital voters in the November general election. These voters will then have a clear, moral obligation as members of the party to support the nominee in the general election. A bond of unity for the general election and a pathway to victory will then be forged based on the respect, trust, and integrity demonstrated by the party and the nominee during the primary and convention battles.

The compact brings values and policy positions to the forefront in the primaries

With this social compact, primary voters will get clear statements of the candidates’ values and public policy positions during debates, town hall meetings, and speeches. Candidates who run name-recognition and focus group-tested, slogan “sound-byte” campaigns will be seen as not adopting the social compact and, therefore, disrespecting grassroots voters. The same will be true of those letting political attacks on rivals happen while standing silent. The candidate’s integrity as well as their values and policy positions will be on clear display.

The compact implements a “trust, but verify” check on the party’s nominee

Another key aspect of this compact is that it alleviates concern with the eventual nominee campaigning to the “right” during the primaries and then moving rhetorically to the “left” during the general election. Such a move would show a lack of respect and integrity, bringing dire consequences in the general election. The ground rules of the social compact establish a check and balance providing grassroots voters an “escape clause”—a version of Reagan’s famous “trust, but verify” approach—should the nominee unwisely “evolve” her or his values and policy positions as the general election unfolds.

Grassroots Republican voters must now demand this new path forward

Another establishment-led presidential campaign loss—as happened in 1976, 1992, 1996, 2008, and 2012—when too many voters became turned-off and tuned-out must be prevented. Instead, what we need now is a repeat of the general presidential election victory of 1980 (Ronald Reagan) and the 2010 and 2014 Congressional election victories, all achieved by strong grassroots Republican voter enthusiasm.

This election-winning voting power of grassroots Republican voters is the bottoms-up leverage now needing to be used to set the Republican Party on a path to victory in 2016. **Thus, for victory in the upcoming general election, grassroots Republican voters must establish the ground rules for the 2016 presidential primaries to achieve the party unity and enthusiasm needed in the general election.** The proposed four ground rules and the resulting social compact uniting the party will form the path forward to achieve this victory in November 2016. Pressure to make this happen must come from these voters themselves.

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