



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on April 18, 2024

It's Still the Economy, Stupid

If Republicans continue to buy into Democrats' framing of the national dialogue, they can expect to keep losing.

During the 1992 U.S. presidential election, top Clinton strategist James Carville coined the famous phrase, "It's the economy, stupid." The statement, part of a longer note intended to keep the Clinton team on message, was hung at the campaign's headquarters in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Clinton, of course, went on to defeat incumbent President George H.W. Bush, in part by capitalizing on public discontent with the administration amid the then-prevalent recession.



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While Carville's slogan has since been adapted into infinite variations, with different terms replacing "economy" in the wording, the original remains an important heuristic for politics and a lesson the GOP should take to heart as it currently finds itself losing its moral center and facing the potential prospect of defeat come November.

Mainstream pundits continue to assert that Republicans should compromise their stances on key issues, such as abortion, in order to appease independents and improve the chance of victory in the general election.

Such a view, however, is shortsighted and displays a lack of understanding of what truly prompts moderate and centrist voters — including those who pay little attention to politics outside of presidential elections — to flip from one party to the other.

The truth is that taking a strong stance on social and constitutional issues does not cause people to defect from the GOP. Such an argument is a lie spun by the mainstream media, which hopes to trick Republicans into abandoning their conservative ideals for the sake of electoral victory, essentially becoming the "Democrat Lite" Party (sadly, the [media's plan is working](#)).

After all, Republicans, until recently, were firmly pro-life for years, and this did not stop them from winning congressional majorities in 2012 and 2014, as well as the presidency in 2016. Gun control, another hot-button issue that sparks headlines and mass demonstrations on both sides of the spectrum, has also not proved a decisive issue during election season no matter how much the media wants to make it so.

Ultimately, it all comes back to Carville's words of wisdom: It's *still* the economy.

As noted above, Bill Clinton rode the wave of economic discontent to victory against a sitting president in 1992. Ronald Reagan did the same prior to that in 1980, taking advantage of high inflation, rising unemployment, and an energy crisis to defeat the incumbent, Jimmy Carter. And Barack Obama's decisive victory against John McCain in 2008 was largely because Americans blamed the Great Recession on George W. Bush and took their anger out on the GOP.



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The pivotal role of economic issues can also be seen in the two most recent elections. Barack Obama failed to fulfill his lofty promise to end the nation's economic woes, leading to a more subdued Obama reelection win against Mitt Romney in 2012 and then a presidential defeat for Democrats in 2016 to Donald Trump.

What is often left out of the conversation these days is that Trump's 2016 win was largely driven by economic concerns; it was a reaction to the malaise characterizing the Obama era and the policies that drove the nation's economic decline, including globalization, offshoring, and mass migration.

And 2020, though marked by evidence of voter fraud, also had an important economic component. While the Trump years brought about a significant boom that saw the nation finally climbing out of the bleakness that had been ever-present since the George W. Bush White House, these gains were undercut by the massive economic blow of Covid-19.

And while the economic shutdown was not of Trump's doing, but rather the result of state and local politicians unconstitutionally ordering the closure of businesses, the general public nevertheless took out their frustration on the man who happened to be in the White House at the time.

This phenomenon is not unique to American politics, but can be seen all throughout history. Voters in various countries and time periods have shown they are more than willing to ignore the unconventional and unorthodox platforms of an individual or a party if they bring delivery from economic hardship.

Consider, for example, that the National Socialists in Germany were long looked down upon as a fringe party of crackpots that would more than likely have never have found the widespread support necessary to gain total power had it not been for the Great Depression. The Nazis promised, and to an extent delivered, economic revival, and this made the German people willing to look past their most extreme positions.

It is clear, then, that if Republicans want to win in 2024, they should not abandon their principles on important social and constitutional issues; doing so would only cost them the base while doing little to win the support of cultural Marxists who are committed to voting Democrat no matter how much the GOP concedes on hot-button issues.

Rather, what the GOP must do is frame the national conversation to refocus on the damage Biden has done to the economy and how a Republican administration would improve the situation. Given the nation's current woes, from inflation to exorbitant grocery and gas prices to interest rates which now bar many young people from purchasing homes, there is more than ample material for Republicans to work with.

This is not to say that Republicans should abandon other issues. They simply must learn to walk and chew gum, to place emphasis on the economy while continuing to pursue the culture war, albeit with less fanfare.

If Trump and the GOP take control of the narrative and focus on the economy, rather than continuing to let the Left lead the conversation where they want, then the election is Republicans' to lose.



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