



Reclaiming the Cities From the Left

You cannot attract that which you do not understand — or that which you inwardly repel.

One of the greatest frustrations of the political Right in America today is the stranglehold the Democratic Party holds over the cities. It is frustrating for two reasons: It has resulted in the decay of many cities, and it has given the Democrats an exorbitant electoral edge.

It's no secret that Democrats dominate inner-city politics. Even in most states where they are in power, such as New York and California, Democrats truly only have total control over the big cities, such as New York City and Los Angeles. Outside of those urban areas, many of those states tend to have conservative populations.

The consequence of this Democratic dominance in the cities is not limited to state politics. Democratic rule in the urban areas of New York and California, for example, is what makes those states go blue in presidential elections. It's the reason the Democratic presidential candidate every four years starts off Election Night with such a huge electoral vote lead.

If Republicans want to break that blue wall that keeps Democrats in power, they have to find a way to be competitive in the cities again.

It's clearly not an impossible feat. Even a deep blue town such as NYC has elected Republican mayors every now and then. This shows that the task is doable given the right candidate, circumstances, and ground game.

Florida is another example of what's possible. For years it was known as a purple state in presidential elections, even though Republicans have dominated the governor's mansion and state Legislature for decades. But the Democratic majorities in the cities, particularly Miami and Fort Lauderdale, gave Democrats enough of an edge to make the state a battleground in presidential elections.

But over the last few years, Republicans have turned this around. President Trump won a solid victory over Joe Biden in Florida in 2020 — 51.2 percent to 47.9 percent. It was nearly a 400,000-vote difference.

In the 2018 governor's race, Republican Ron DeSantis just barely squeaked out a win over Democrat Andrew Gillum with a 0.4 percent lead. But in 2022, he won reelection handily, 59.3 percent to 39.97 percent over Democrat Charlie Crist — a 20-point advantage.

One of the ingredients in DeSantis' landslide victory in 2022 was winning Miami-Dade, a rare feat for Republicans.



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Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on May 14, 2023

Once again, this shows that the urban areas are not doomed to be Democratic. Republicans can be competitive and win in them — if they play their cards right.

There's nothing about cities that says they inevitably have to be leftist or liberal. One of the reasons today's cities tend to lean to the left is demographics; the cities have been bombarded with migration from the Third World; and new immigrants have often been prime recruits of the Democratic Party, going all the way back to the Tammany Hall Democratic machine in New York City pulling in Irish immigrants the moment they got off the boats.

But DeSantis' recent win in Miami-Dade was due to his growing support among the state's Hispanics — a demographic that people typically associate with Democrats. Moreover, he achieved that while being a hawk on illegal immigration.

The lesson is: Even if many cities have huge populations of ethnic minorities, that does not necessarily mean the Republican Party cannot be competitive there. And it does not mean the party has to sacrifice its principles to achieve it.

One problem is that many Republicans, coming from agricultural, small-town, or suburban backgrounds, do not understand city life and even hold it in disdain.

Just as the man who hates money and views it as something evil cannot hope to attract wealth, so Republicans cannot win over the cities if inwardly they hold them in contempt.

Although conservatives often sneer at “city values” and believe cities to be conducive to both vice and tyrannical government, the reality is that there is nothing about cities that makes them inherently incompatible with a free society.

On the contrary, in the distant past it was generally in cities that republicanism took hold. Look at the republic of ancient Rome, or its spiritual predecessors — the democracies of ancient Greece.

And in the Middle Ages, it was in cities such as Venice, Florence, and Genoa that republics prospered, while it was in agricultural societies that feudalism took hold.

Those feudalistic societies were eventually able to break out of their tyranny because of the cities. The peasants who formed the cities obtained charters that allowed them autonomous government, away from the control of the feudal lords. In the cities, commoners had the freedom to build their own wealth and enjoy the upward mobility they never could have dreamed of as serfs.

Moreover, it was in the cities, particularly on the Italian Peninsula, that many of the great achievements of Western civilization, such as the art and scholarship of the Renaissance, were produced.

The key, ultimately, is for Republicans to go beyond the broad, small-government messaging that works easily with rural communities. They should maintain those principles in practice, but find creative ways to develop messaging that is locally tailored to the needs and priorities of the particular cities they want to win over.



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