



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on December 13, 2025

“Trumpism” Is Here to Stay: There’s Not “Going to Be a Return to Old Republicanism”

Establishment Republicans may not like the MAGA movement. Establishment Republicans may want it to disappear. Establishment Republicans may hope it’s going to soon run its course.

Establishment Republicans’ hopes are in vain.

So says Dr. Kevin Roberts, president of The Heritage Foundation, one of America’s most influential think tanks. Who is he really, though, that we should put stock in such a prognostication?

Answer: the latest in a long line of observers who’ve predicted likewise.

“Trumpism Is The New American Phenomenon And It’s Here To Stay,” declared a July News X World [headline](#).

“Trumpism Is Here to Stay,” stated a June [headline](#) at the American Mind.

“Trumpism Is Here to Stay,” proclaimed a 2021 [headline](#) at *The American Spectator*.

“Why Trumpism is here to stay,” read a 2020 [headline](#) at *The Hill*.

I don’t know who’s being original and who, if anyone, is being plagiarized but, well, you get the idea. There’s a chorus of voices. But assuming this Trumpism-staying-power thesis is correct, perhaps understanding why rests in grasping that it isn’t actually “Trumpism.” It’s far older.

The “Pitchfork Populist”

To find its origins, we must travel back three decades, to the 1992 through 2000 presidential campaigns. It was then that pugnacious pundit and ex-presidential aide Pat Buchanan was mounting insurgent runs for the White House. As the *Christian Science Monitor* [wrote](#) in 2016, he

took the Republican Party by storm as a “pitchfork populist,” running for president on a platform of economic nationalism, sealing the border, and isolationism. Mr. Buchanan’s high point came in 1996, when he won the New Hampshire primary. Today, the rise of Donald Trump carries distinct echoes of Buchanan. He is, in a way, the godfather of “Trumpism.”

I remember the Buchanan campaigns well. His 1996 (I believe it was) effort was the first and only presidential campaign I ever donated money to. It was that year he proclaimed that when he wins the White House, “the New World Order comes crashing down.”

Buchanan shared much with today’s President Donald Trump. Though Buchanan was less impulsive and thus avoided making impolitic statements, he was also good in front of a camera, charming, colorful,



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and adept at getting free media attention. Why, he even repeatedly used the phrase “Make America great again.”

Alas, though, MAGA’s time had not yet come. Under the Strauss-Howe [generational theory](#), we were then in a “Third Turning,” where people become disenchanted with the status quo. The “Fourth Turning” is when revolution occurs — and that time would be a generation away.

An Enduring Movement

So MAGA won’t end with Trump for a simple reason: It didn’t begin with Trump. It’s a movement whose time has come. This brings us to Dr. Kevin Roberts’ thesis, which [was presented](#) at *The Telegraph* last week. What follows is a Grok AI summary of it:

Heritage Foundation president Kevin Roberts, in London, hailed Donald Trump’s second term as “awesome” and “glorious.” He credits the swift adoption of major Project 2025 proposals — including civil-service reform, ending DEI programs, exiting the WHO and Paris Agreement, welfare changes, and a harder foreign-policy line — for the administration’s early momentum.

Roberts believes the assassination of Charlie Kirk has galvanised the American Right. He criticised British and European elites for favouring migrants over citizens, praised recent farmers’ protests, and voiced alarm at Marxist Zohran Mamdani’s election as New York mayor.

... Looking ahead, he declared there will be “sure as hell not ... a return to old Republicanism,” forecasting a permanent fusion of conservatism and populism that will define the GOP for 2028 and beyond — a movement, he says, demanded by the American (and increasingly British) people.

As Roberts summed up, MAGA is “what the movement’s going to look like, because that’s where the electorate is.”

Roberts also mentioned a somewhat deeper issue. Relating to our erstwhile Christian sense of virtue he said:

If there is going to be a vibrant future for the West, it is going to be because we re-embrace those [Christian] values rather than shun them. You don’t have to go to church, but if you don’t realise the first principle of conservatism is an enduring moral order, none of our politics will make sense.

Missing the Point?

This said, the philosophically inclined may note a contradiction here. The MAGA movement is a rejection of the status quo. Yet, [as I’ve illustrated repeatedly](#), the only consistent definition of “conservatism” relates to a desire to maintain the status quo. Therefore, is not MAGA — and today’s burgeoning left-wing populism for that matter — a rejection of both yesterday’s liberalism *and* conservatism?

As G.K. Chesterton noted in 1924, “The business of Progressives is to go on making mistakes. The



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business of Conservatives is to prevent mistakes from being corrected.” Chesterton also observed in his 1908 book *Orthodoxy* that

all conservatism is based upon the idea that if you leave things alone you leave them as they are. But you do not. If you leave a thing alone you leave it to a torrent of change. If you leave a white post alone it will soon be a black post. If you particularly want it to be white you must be always painting it again; that is, you must be always having a revolution. Briefly, if you want the old white post you must have a new white post.

And the Conclusion Is...?

The point: The MAGA movement is *not* conservative. As the Founders were, it is *revolutionary*.

Generally speaking, the political pattern has been this: The Democrats seize power and, legislatively, move the country left. The Republicans then eventually win political power themselves and, legislatively, move the country...not at all. Their governance amounts to a mere holding action. This is [partially because conservatism is defensive by nature](#), and partially because [the culture continues drifting left regardless](#). The result?

Well, for example, Democrats would

- welcome illegal aliens, but the GOP would never deport them;
- institute affirmative action (now DEI), and Republicans would never overturn it;
- enact “hate speech” laws, and the GOP *might* only fight to limit their expansion;
- essentially ship manufacturing overseas, and the Republicans would be complicit; and
- institute anti-Second Amendment laws, and the GOP would never try to rescind them.

In contrast, when Trump mentions ending Third World immigration and Representative Chip Roy (R-Texas) and Nalin Haley (and many others) insist on a complete immigration moratorium, they’re being not “conservative,” but revolutionary. Ditto for when

- certain “red” states require posting the Ten Commandments [in every classroom](#);
- such states ban DEI, “gender” instruction, and identity politics in schools;
- people, some black Americans included, embrace in-your-face political incorrectness and start openly bemoaning “[black fatigue](#)”; and
- Americans push back against the sexual devolutionaries and reverse “transgender” advances.

Of course, there’s still a long way to go to sanity. (E.g., how about eliminating anti-discrimination law, as [it tramples freedom of association](#)?)

The reality: The old Republicanism isn’t coming back because it’s conservative, as in defensive. And more and more Americans are realizing that when all you’re doing is conserving the leftism-spawned elements of your own destruction, the status quo has got to go.



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