

Reagan At 100

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by *Conor Friedersdorf*

Libertarian David Boaz is among the many writers [reflecting](#) on Ronald Reagan:

When we're feeling positive, we remember that he [used to say](#), "[Libertarianism](#) is the heart and soul of conservatism." Other times, we call to mind his military interventionism, his encouragement of the then-new religious right ("[I know you can't endorse me, but I endorse you.](#)"), and his failure to really reduce the [size of government](#). But the more experience we have with later presidents, the better Reagan looks in retrospect.

He adds this apt criticism:

Edward H. Crane, the president of the Cato Institute, wrote in the *Wall Street Journal* in 1988 that Reagan never paid much attention to the people he appointed to important positions in his administrations in Sacramento and Washington, thus undercutting his own efforts to implement his goals and policies. He appointed a lieutenant governor of California he'd barely met. He promised to abolish the departments of Energy and Education, then appointed secretaries who had no interest in carrying out that mission. And most particularly, he chose George Bush as his vice president and then endorsed him for the presidency. Perhaps Ronald Reagan's worst legacy is 12 years of Bush presidencies.

Doug Mataconis had a good [post](#) on Reagan too. Like Boaz and Mataconis, I tend to think he was a very good president compared to many others who've held that position, and that the right tends to go a bit overboard with the hagiography, whereas [confronting the faults](#) of a successful man prove instructive.

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