

Ten Big Ideas to Help Republicans Win in 2024

Michael W. Burns

February 11, 2024

Americans loathe politics when there's nothing of any substance to talk about. That's the message from more than 20 years of annual surveys and polling data, often substantiated by the swinging pendulum of congressional majorities won and lost. If you're experiencing nausea about this election season, it's probably because of a leadership vacuum that hasn't pierced the holy veil of the Republican establishment quite yet.

Republicans desperately need to focus on a psychological reset with likely voters vis-à-vis new thought leadership in order to become bona fide category owners, and thereby capture the hearts and minds of disenchanted voters, NeverTrumpers, suburban women, and independent voters, some of whom are signaling a true loathing mixed with a preference for a viable third-party candidate.

In order to get the wheels turning, here are 10 big ideas that the Republican Party ought to consider in order to reinvigorate their brand and put the country on a better path leading up to the general election and beyond.

1. Return to Number 1 You're probably dismayed by our declining rankings on any reputable list of the freest nations on Earth, which show us as well below the top 10 rankings in annual reports by the Cato Institute, the Frazier Institute, and the like. Putting us at least within the top 5 shouldn't require prolonged committee hearings, speeches, or campaigning. The only thing that we really have to do is to mandate by law that we rank within the top 5 as a first priority every year by Congress, and that everything else should follow suit. You either believe in liberty and freedom, or you don't. Creating new parameters for how Congress functions should start here. And if they don't make the numbers, the RNC should initiate annual "no-confidence" reports on the Republican members of Congress who are standing in the way.

2. Mandate Growth. We require an adult conversation to acknowledge that historically we've never been all that great at governing, in contrast to the fact that the American people really don't want to be governed. Achieving a big psychological reset in the minds of likely voters starts by advocating a "Growth First" mandate that offers clear thinking that most Americans would agree with, without a lot of complicated analysis on granular issues. A simple way to ensure this is by requiring as a matter of law that, among other key economic indicators, GDP should be hitting a bare minimum of 4 percent, and that all economic strategies should be updated accordingly each quarter. Congress would have latitude each January get it right as their first priority within three consecutive months. And if not, those decisions should be automatically re-delegated to an

interstate task force that would be run through appointments of the governors of the five leading states for economic growth every year. Each January, the process would repeat itself again if the numbers don't hit 4 percent, thereby ensuring that maximum transparency and accountability is permanently baked in.

3. Energy Independence. This one hardly needs an explanation, but bears repeating since we're once again dealing with high gas prices along with an increased cost of living, and an administration that is staunchly opposed to energy efficiency. Mandating energy independence as a matter of federal law would put an end to this nonsense, and drive energy prices down to consumer-friendly levels in perpetuity.

4. Festivus Veto Authority. If you're a fan of Senator Rand Paul's annual Festivus Report, which details annual pork barrel spending, then you'll probably like the idea of allowing the President with full and partial veto authority. No backroom deal-making or future promises to get it right next time. And in cases where the country is in a clear recession, this authority could be mandated automatically without the President's official signature.

5. Blockchain for Everything. Whether involving document management, inventory management, auditing, or broad-based financial accountability for every federal agency, the Biden Administration repeated faux pas comprise an obvious call to secure every aspect of public data where full transparency and accountability is mandatory, not optional.

6. Defining High-Trust, versus Low-Trust, or No-Trust. We now live in a dressed-up low-trust society with congressional approval ratings hovering at or about 13% annually. Assigning an operating criteria for Congress based on real data each January is absolutely essential to limit congressional decision-making authority until things improve above 50 percent. That means if your numbers are in the tank, there's only going to be a small handful of decisions that you can be involved in until your performance substantially improves. For the Republican Party, tying the hands of its congressional representatives by barring them from certain kinds of misbehavior, such as voting on taxing and spending when contrasting data shows otherwise, could be augmented through the use of legally binding contracts that, upon a finding of good cause, could allow their state committees to sack them at the end of the year, or assess them with hefty fines and penalties. And given the prevalence of RINOs in both the House and Senate who have been there far too long, this would easily provide a new playing field for true Republican representation in Congress.

7. Single Taxation. As most congressional historians are aware of the improper ratification of the 16th and 17th amendments, moving to a single-tax authority run by and through the states would bring about a partial remedy to excessive taxation and spending, while sunseting the federal tax system with the exception of tax and auditing of corporations with annual revenues beyond \$100 million. Under such a system, the states would be allowed to engage in direct taxation on their own terms, while providing quarterly and annual payments to the Treasury Department.

8. Mandatory Cognitive Testing and Remediation. If Biden's cognitive debacle has you worried, the lack of basic math skills by certain members of Congress in the face of more than

\$34 trillion in debt should be equally as concerning. Add to it the apparent “cause blindness” associated with the questionable January 6 Committee, post-election maneuvering, and bogus court cases in New York, Georgia, Florida, and Arizona all signal that it’s time for adult remediation. IQ and cognitive testing, including bias testing, could help identify blind spots for every branch of government, while also providing opportunities for additional training. If it’s good enough for the private sector, it’s good enough for Washington.

9. CLE for Congress. With the prevalence of Continuing Legal Education (CLE) at the state level, and with two-thirds of Congress being dominated by former trial lawyers and prosecutors, there is a resounding need to help educate Republican members of Congress about key economic and constitutional issues on a timely basis that are clearly not a part of their current discourse. And given that every American has been effectively reclassified as a potential criminal, the timing for such provisions would be well-received.

10. Sunset Commissions. If the concept of a debt commission rings true, then unquestionably, this should lead to deeper questions about the untouched nature of decades-old laws that are worthy of sunset or nullification provisions. Congress could create a scorecard to help identify the most problematic areas of law as a first priority to help guide their thinking on what to address, followed by the involvement of state governors to appoint non-crony outsiders to remove bias from the process, utilizing a rotating membership each year to avoid compromised decision making.