

Trump hijacked the Republican brand. I can restore its principles.

Bill Weld

January 16, 2020

My name is Bill Weld. I'm a Republican running for president of the United States. I'm running because I believe Americans — Republicans, independents, and Democrats — deserve better leadership than we have in Washington, D.C., today. And for Republicans in particular, I'm running to offer the opportunity to elect a president who actually believes in the principles of limited government, free and fair markets, and economic opportunity for all. Principles that, until Donald Trump took over, were the trademarks of a great political party.

Those principles are important to me. I had the great honor to serve President Ronald Reagan as the U.S. attorney for Massachusetts, where I successfully prosecuted more than 100 cases of public corruption. Then, as the assistant U.S. attorney general in charge of the criminal division, I had the opportunity to lead many of President Reagan's criminal justice initiatives.

In 1990, I was the first Republican to be elected governor of Massachusetts in 20 years. When I took office, the state faced a \$1.3 billion deficit. Unemployment was 9.1%, and taxes were among the highest in the nation. The state's bond rating was little better than junk bonds.

Despite a Legislature where Democrats outnumbered Republicans by 3 to 1 (we're talking about Massachusetts, after all.), I worked across party lines to cut taxes 21 times, balanced the budget, cut wasteful programs, and signed into law one of the strongest welfare reforms in the country.

Massachusetts didn't just recover. Massachusetts thrived. Based on that record, both the Wall Street Journal and the CATO Institute ranked me as the most fiscally conservative governor in the nation. I achieved that distinction while dramatically improving education, improving services and leading the way to long-overdue protections of our natural resources and the environment.

In short, I'm a Republican ... and governed that way, unlike Donald J. Trump, who has hijacked the Republican brand and replaced it with some bizarre and compulsive mix of government intervention in the marketplace, trade wars launched by tweet that could well cost Iowa farmers overseas customers for decades to come, and trillion-dollar deficits that literally threaten our young people's very futures.

Republicans have never believed we can spend our way to prosperity, but Donald Trump is giving it a heck of a try. Republicans have always understood that the Chinese don't pay tariffs we slap on them. American farmers, employers and consumers pay them.

We believe in the rule of law. Donald Trump doesn't believe the law applies to him. We believe the Constitution means what it says. Donald Trump scoffs at its inconvenient restraints on the

power he so desperately covets. And we believe the purpose of foreign policy and our military is to make us safer and to protect the freedoms that make America uniquely great.

As I travel across Iowa and the nation, I don't run into very many Americans who feel safer today than they did three years ago — or three weeks ago.

I understand why Donald Trump was elected. I really do. America had watched as both parties spent us — and our children — into bankruptcy. Mothers, fathers, husbands, wives and children had stayed awake at night worrying as our amazing men and women of the military were sent into endless wars with no clear objectives. Young people had grown tired of watching the politicians quibble and dither while doing nothing to understand, much less deal with, an obviously changing climate.

Trying something — or someone — different was an appealing choice. But let's face facts. Donald J. Trump is an experiment that has gone dangerously awry.

America deserves better. Republicans deserve better. Iowans deserve better. The choice in November doesn't have to be between a liberal Democrat and an erratic, undisciplined president who treats the White House as just another business acquisition ... and calls himself a Republican.

THAT is why I am running for president.