

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2009

## Ronald Reagan's Greatest Disappointment



**By: Ryan Jaroneyk, THL Contributor**

Since 2007, the GOP has been prolifically citing President Ronald Reagan as its primary source of inspiration.

In 2007-2008, the presidential candidates mentioned Reagan a dizzying number of times in the debates, and popular conservative commentators such as Rush Limbaugh and Sean Hannity frequently appeal to him as the standard bearer of the Republican Party.

Reagan is viewed as the epitome of conservatism, a man whose tax cuts produced a veritable economic boom in the 1980s, whose foreign policy defeated the mighty Soviets, and whose philosophy of limited government, individual responsibility, and traditional family values shaped a nation.

While Reagan's reputation is unmatched in the conservative community, perhaps we should take a closer look at what he himself called his "greatest disappointment." For even great men make mistakes.

According to a Cato Institute [analysis](#) back in 1996, Reagan's fiscal policies generated a significant number of positive developments. GDP growth averaged 3.2% during his tenure, compared to 2.8% during the Ford-Carter years and 2.1% during the Bush I-Clinton years.

Real median family income rose by \$4,000 during the Reagan years, while it remained static pre-Reagan, and fell by almost \$1,500 post-Reagan. Interest rates, inflation, and unemployment fell faster