

# The Delray Democrat

## American Exceptionalism Is Dead. Republicans Killed It<sup>1</sup>

*Rob Resnick*

American Exceptionalism has been around for generations. Conceptually it represents that the US is a beacon to the world for democracy and a shining example to the world of how to operate the complexities of a democratic republic. Many would go so far as to say this includes the belief in American infallibility, that we do no wrong. However you define this, Republicans have killed it. We are NOT currently a shining example of democracy.

Putting aside challenges of extreme gerrymandering, voter suppression, and vitriolic politics for the moment as part of a much broader conversation, although clearly relevant here as well, we need to focus on the transformation of the Republican party into the MAGA-fueled, QAnon, White Supremacist, Insurrectionist organization it has become. Recent primary results further demonstrate the ensuing peril. Extremist candidates have fared well in primaries across the nation and at all levels of government.

The Republican Party has been overwhelmed by these extremists. It no longer explores or stands for ideologies such as economic policy, defense policy, or the panoply of critical issues government must address for the people it serves.

The party is now consumed by dishonesty and deception. It supports violent insurrection, stands for election denial and claims of fraud, despite a pronounced lack of evidence in any state or realistic claim of impact on any state result. In fact, the rare demonstrated acts of fraud were perpetuated on behalf of Trump himself. Facts are irrelevant to today's Republicans. In Trump's brazen image, party faithful repeat blatant lies to the point they overcome underinformed, susceptible constituents. They play upon fear and sow mistrust to undermine democratic institutions they plan to replace with a new White Christian Nationalist brand of fascism.

If the primary results are any indication, the Republican Party now stands for stealing elections through lies, discarding properly cast votes for opponents, insurrection, pushing outrageous extremism while denying basic freedoms from those demographically or ideologically different, and replacing democracy with authoritarianism. Such candidates used to be relegated to the fringe, discounted, and even silenced. Now they win elections and garner media attention to prop up their bogus campaigns. Right wing media actively supports these candidates and their brand of authoritarian terror.

This seems like a dystopian future drama on Netflix, but it is a very real, existential threat we face. We no longer have two political parties offering a binary choice of ideology to frame national policy. We have the center-left Democratic Party as virtually the lone alternative to the neo fascist Republican Party seeking to create an American autocracy. If they are successful, we will cease to be a democracy. The freedom and liberty that we fought to establish throughout history will be vaporized. Opposition to the new White Christian nationalism will become illegal with all power

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consolidated by the Republican loyalist internal security machine. If this doesn't scare you, you need to pay attention. This will be the death of American Exceptionalism. We will cease to be a democracy, cease to uphold basic freedom for our people, and no longer serve as an example to anyone, other than an example of how to lose a democracy.

Viktor Orban was a keynote speaker at this year's Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC), an annual marquee Republican event. Orban has abused his authority as Hungary's Prime Minister, consolidated power, outlawed a free press, limited the rights of his people, advanced racial purity, attacked immigrants, and imitated other fascist, nationalist propaganda. This is the man Republicans chose to honor, and with a standing ovation. Of all accomplished individuals at home and abroad, they specifically invited an individual working hard to dismantle a democracy, subjugate a free people, and echo Nazi Germany rather than the free world that we fought hard to create since World War II and the fall of the Iron Curtain. Beyond shameful.

While Orban was being celebrated, many Republican officials who did nothing more than faithfully execute their sworn duties are being soundly defeated and replaced by unqualified, inexperienced, dangerous extremists. Long time, steadfast conservatives who followed the law, appeared under subpoena, and testified truthfully under oath are being punished. In Trump's MAGA world, they were supposed to betray their oaths and lie for him. Even further, candidates must commit to employing the new Republican machinery to steal elections, even so far as "de-certifying" the 2020 election, despite no legal or Constitutional mechanism to do so, not to mention no factual basis whatsoever. If you support democracy and the rule of law, you can't win a Republican primary.

In previous years, such extremist candidates would be swept away in general elections by independent voters overwhelmingly rejecting them and reasonable, responsible Republicans staying home or voting for a different candidate. For example, Delaware Senator Chris Coons, when he first ran for Senate, was "destined" to be soundly defeated by Delaware's Republican Congressman. In a shocking surprise, the congressman lost the primary to a woman who in her commercials referred to herself as a "witch." Voters rejected this inexperienced weirdo and wound up with one of the finest senators we have today. Unfortunately, in today's world, there is a much lesser chance of a similar result and much greater chance of a dangerous, unqualified extremist winning. A deranged witch could become a Republican senator.

Currently, legitimate Republican candidates who lose to the unfit extremists embrace them. This is reprehensible. They know the danger these candidates pose to democracy, freedom, and proper governance. They need to refuse to endorse or support in any way these extremists, or at least stay quiet. Unless there is a consequence of nominating such dangerously unqualified, unfit, individuals, they will keep winning primaries. All responsible voters must oppose these candidates, period, or we lose our democracy.

When candidates choose party, especially when represented by unqualified extremists, over country, we lose our democracy. When voters choose fear and authoritarianism over the rule of law, we lose our democracy. Patriotism is putting country first. Patriotism is standing up for true liberty and freedom for all, not political power. Patriots do not support insurrection or violence. If Republicans continue to win espousing their White Christian Nationalism, we will lose our democracy. American Exceptionalism will be dead. Republicans will have killed it.

