



OpEdNews.com

Exclusive to OpEdNews:

OpEdNews Op Eds 6/2/2021 at 10:36 AM EDT H1'ed 6/2/21

Red Alert: Progressives, Democrats Must Confront Republican "Trigger Words" or Lose Seats and Both Houses in 2022

By Robert Weiner and Adjanni Ramos



2017 NYC Labor Parade (9)

(Image by [Thomas Altfather Good](#) from flickr) [Details](#) [DMCA](#)

By Robert Weiner and Adjanni Ramos

The recent history of Progressives and the Democratic Party as a whole is to lose big in numbers during the first off-year election. Congress flipped from Blue to Red after the beginning of both the Clinton and Obama administrations, in the 1994 and 2010 congressional elections. Democrats lost 14 seats in the Senate and 54 seats in the House during the Clinton administration in 1994. Although they were able to keep the Senate until Obama's last off-year election, they lost 64 seats in the House. Neither administration was able to regain both House and Senate until the next elected President.

Congressional Republicans took greater advantage of the messaging issue and were quite good at winning House and Senate races. They will do so again, and this time it could carry them over, since Trump will not be on the ballot in 2022. Democrats are slowly moving toward losing to Republicans in the House or Senate during Biden's first off-year election, as they did during Clinton and Obama. As sure as day, Republicans will say: "Police Defunding," "Socialism," "Big Spenders," "Government Overreach," "Over-regulation," "Tax Increases", and "Hyping the Capitol Riots." These are Republican trigger words that voters historically react to, and Democrats repeatedly fail to give good counterpoints to. Democrats must have short, punchy, pithy, persuasive counterattacks. Words matter.

On Socialism

Argument:

"Democrats are socialist." Republicans love calling Democrats and their agendas socialists. Sen. Mitch McConnell and his team (R-KY) want to say they're going to stop Democrats from passing their "socialist" bills. After President Biden offered his Infrastructure Plan, Republicans began accusing it of being a calling it a "Soviet-style...wish list"

Solution:

Every time Republicans talk about socialism amongst Democrats, which this is not, Democrats can point out the fascist tendencies in Trump's language and actions. Republicans want to lower taxes on the rich and wealthy and pass voting laws that restrict voting. President Joe Biden has openly said, "I beat the socialists. That's how I got elected. That's how I got the nomination." But he and all Democratic and progressive candidates need to say they are supporting "people programs, which are what Republicans oppose." Are libraries, Medicare, public colleges and school education and K-12 schools, food security, fire departments, drug treatment, assistance to hospitals, needed housing assistance, working roads/bridges/tunnels/electric grids/updated computer systems, even aid to small businesses and restaurants devastated by COVID, "socialist?" or self-interested help by the nation to people to help the country work better?

Sen. Bernie Sanders (D-VT) and Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) have both self-identified as socialists but base their belief system on programs for people rather than dictators. Nonetheless, Biden and Congressional candidates have to say, "I own the middle which most Democrats want, and define the middle as fixing the services - like infrastructure - that polls show the vast majority of Americans want."

On Police Defunding

Argument:

Republicans repeatedly decried Black-Lives-Matter protesters as rioters throughout the first half of 2020. Democrats suffered electorally due to the Republican branding of them for "defund the police" and other supposed anti-police rhetoric.

Solution:

Progressives and Democrats have failed to say they simply want to stop "police murder and brutality" where it occurs. Democrats want to establish more community cops. They should point out Biden added 100,000 "community police" when he chaired the Senate Judiciary Committee, and Congress adopted that proposal. Republicans have been the ones trying to defund it ever since. We need and must fund more community police. Democrats and Progressives should point out how the Republicans have dismantled all efforts to establish and fund Police Reform, and even as we write are trying to do the least possible to get away with the horror of murders like George Floyd's.

On Tax-Increases

On election years, Republicans always say that Democrats are going to "raise taxes and on the backs of hardworking Americans."

Solution:

President Joe Biden has already stated he will create tax fairness by assuring people who don't pay what they should, do so. He is only reversing Trump's tax-breaks for the super-rich or corporations, who get away with minimal or no taxes. He has even promised no new taxes for people making less than \$400,000 a year. Point out that conservatives and Republican administrations, when elected to the White House or Congress, are notorious for lowering taxes on high-income individuals and corporations. Former President Donald Trump's tax returns showed that in several years he did not pay more than \$750 in federal income taxes. Democrats and progressives can point to Biden's condemning allowing over 50 Fortune 500 companies with \$50 billion profit paying no taxes.

On Big Spending and the Deficit

Argument:

Republicans consistently accuse Democrats of being "big spenders," claiming they consistently spend more than they should to pay for their various "liberal social programs." Republicans decry the "Deficit Doom" of increased government spending.

Solution:

Trump created a \$2 trillion deficit with unpaid tax breaks for the wealthy. Biden is "fixing" that. Biden's spending helps with jobs and quality of life for lower- and middle-class Americans, adding to their ability to earn more and pay taxes. Clinton and Obama created surpluses by what they did for the middle class. The GDP has increased 4.7% in the last decade, but it decreased during the Trump administration by approximately 2.5%. According to economists Alan Blinder and Mark Watson from Princeton University, the U.S. economy grows faster during Democratic Presidencies, based on GDP and other measures. Democrats produce more jobs, lower unemployment, and have higher stock market returns. Trump was the only president since Hoover to leave with fewer jobs. Newsweek confirmed Trump having "the worst jobs record since Hoover."

On Over-Regulation:

Argument:

Republicans love to oppose "over-regulation" whenever a Democratic bill establishes regulations that affect Republican interests. They say that these regulations force a government-imposed precedent over the expertise of local businessmen, that regulations impose on business and personal freedoms and destroy jobs and economic growth.

Solution:

Regulations are double-sided coins for Republicans, and they control which side it lands whenever they toss it. Republicans love to impose regulations on Health Providers as Reagan did with the "gag-rule" and abortion clinics. They will, however, lift regulations on banks who would love to go back to selling and trading unregulated bonds and CDO's. Do we want to breathe clean air, drink unleaded water, drive safe cars, suffer fewer hurricanes and forest fires, and have safe workplaces? Democrats must point out that will not happen if big business is left to themselves, as tobacco and oil had been for far too long. Ask, "will that oversight happen without government oversight?"

On Public Schools & Colleges

Argument:

Although Republicans support higher education and funding for schools and teachers, they accuse Universities of trying to teach a "liberal agenda." The supposed "wokeness" of public education is ruining this country. Republicans believe that Democrats have a lack of fiscal responsibility when they propose making education free and forgiving student loans

Solution:

It's illegal to teach that any race, ethnic group, gender, color, or religion is superior or inferior to another. Republican governors historically cut public school funding because they are multicultural, which threatens Republican right-winged ideologies. When you lower funds for Public Colleges and Universities, the cost of attending college increases, making it harder for students avoid taking loans. Why should students indebted themselves for hundreds of thousands of dollars so that they can have a small taste of the American Dream. "Skin in the game" does not mean drowning. Supporting students is an investment in America's future.

On The Capitol Riots:

Argument:

Republican Congressmen argue that the January 6th, 2021 Capitol Riot was not an insurrection, but an average, everyday protest. Rep. Andrew Clyde (R-GA), who supported the voting-restriction bill in his home state of Georgia, claimed during a House Oversight Committee hearing that "the House floor was never breached and it was not an insurrection" but a "regular tourist day." Trump Republicans have said the riot was enacted by Black-Lives-Matter Protesters and the far left's Antifa.

Solution:

Say to watch the tapes and bodycam footage. Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani openly called on Trump supporters for "trial by combat" during the Save America Rally, the morning of the January 6th Capitol Riot. Security from the Capitol and bodycam footage from officers in the riot, openly show protesters with red MAGA hats furling Trump flags, using blunt objects and chemical weapons to attack and break into the Capitol building.

Approximately 440 individuals have already been arrested for their leading parts in the insurrection, and more are currently wanted. The evidence of who was on which side will only be increasing as the court cases occur. Trump's rhetoric at the January 6 White House rally insisting there was election fraud during the 2020 presidential elections, included the then-president's statement, "We're going to the Capitol," and he agitated his supporters who included the riot's leaders and followers. Our democracy was threatened at its heart.

In conclusion, as they demonize Democrats as socialist and pro-crime, Republicans vote to pass voter suppression laws and oppose funding for first responders and police departments.

In 1948, while speaking in Scotland, Winston Churchill said, "Socialism is the philosophy of failure." From Bernie Sanders to the "Squad," Democratic progressives need to say they are simply pointing out that Democrats know that opportunity brings success. This is not old-world socialism-- in 2021 and 2022, they're programs for people, libraries, food, jobs, infrastructure, community policing, families, and monetary success in a capitalist world and country.

Robert Weiner was a spokesman in the Clinton and George W. Bush White Houses. He was Communications Director of the House Government Operations Committee, and Senior Aide to Four-Star Gen/Drug Czar Barry McCaffrey and Reps. John Conyers, Charles Rangel, Claude Pepper, and Ed Koch. Adjanni Ramos is a Policy and Research Analyst at Robert Weiner Associates and Solutions for Change.