

John Fund speech – Feb. 18

John Fund was the featured speaker at the 2013 sold out Presidents Day annual banquet at the Plantation Ballroom February 18.

He is National Affairs Columnist for *National Review* magazine, a frequent guest on the Fox News Channel and a former editorial board member for *The Wall Street Journal*. He is the author of several books, including *Stealing Elections: How Voter Fraud Threatens Our Democracy* and *The Dangers of Regulation Through Litigation*.

He focused on two current themes:

- The last election was not a mandate that should overly concern
- There is future threat that should worry you more.

Why the Republicans Lost

Don't believe the liberal spin that this was a mandate and a transformational election to end the conservative movement. All winners try to demoralize the opponents into possibly giving up next time as the electorate has now swung totally to their ideology. Nice try. By the way, Republicans have tried the same tactic when they won, but the Democrats didn't give up. They just sniped incessantly as the minority party when anything went wrong.

It was much closer and could easily have gone the other way. We have to concede that the Democratic strategy was brilliant (if not deceptive). By Balkanizing the electorate, they were able to squeak out close victories in key swing states. Their clever ads got an extra 155,000 minority votes to take Ohio, and extra 100,000 Hispanic votes in Florida, and merely 65,000 more in Florida.

Meanwhile, the Romney Campaign people were floundering in a high tech but untested new program to get out the vote, which crashed before it could be fully implemented.

Romney actually emerged as a credible candidate after the grueling primaries, but never could withstand the previous branding of him as a heartless anti-female capitalist. The Obama campaign took full advantage of his not being challenged in primaries to spend all their time and money demonizing the opponent before he even had a chance to respond.

Incumbents Usually Win

Still it was a fairly close election (2 to 3%) despite the fact that incumbents rarely are defeated. Clinton survived despite many missteps and even Bush 43 did despite a very unpopular Iraq war. Notable exceptions to incumbents usually winning were Jimmy Carter (beaten by super star candidate Ronald Reagan) and Bush 41 (who reneged on his "no new taxes" pledge).

The latter is also an exception to the rule that two term presidents always cede power to the other party at the end. Bush 41 was an exception as a winner even for one term (He beat Dukakis).

Candidate Qualities Characterized

Fund next summarized the typical Democratic candidates as "Endless Blind Dates". They constantly look for new blood and never really vet their candidates in advance. McGovern was a major loser. Jimmy Carter had all kinds of leadership flaws, and of course Bill Clinton had his bimbo eruptions.

Kerry was found as a quick rebound to front-runner Howard Dean's public meltdown. And then there is Barack, where virtually nothing is still known about his past history.

In contrast is Fund's description of Republican candidates as "Next Guy in Line." Whoever lost the last primary or was a VP is always presumed to be the front-runner in some sort of "loyalty" rule. Nixon, Dole, Bush, McCain, Romney all were prominent in prior presidential primaries or VP candidates.

Competition from a newcomer is always a very long process. Maybe in eight or twelve years you may get your turn.

Don't Give Up. Prepare Better Next Time

One thing going for Republicans for future elections is that liberal policies usually fail because they are fundamentally flawed. The key is to have a public narrative that appeals to the average voter on why liberals need to be ousted from power.

The Newest Threat – Changing the Rules

What could thwart the next cycle, where the out party has a big advantage to take over from a two-term presidency, is a major change in the voting rules.

It is obvious that in states with strong voter ID rules (e.g. photos), there is much less fraud and even temptations to defraud. The Supreme Court validated photo IDs (with liberal justice Stephens even voting for it) because it is strongly consistent with the Voting Rights Act (“every vote should count”). Yet a fraudulent vote cancels out a valid vote, and it just as much a violation of voting rights.

Notwithstanding this principle, liberals always employ scare tactics to try to allow as much leeway as possible to let many questionable votes count.

A prominent case was the election of Al Franken to the Senate. As of today there are nearly as many felony convictions of Democratic voters who gave the very close Minnesota election to Franken at the last minute. Note that an actual conviction is very hard to get because it has to be proven that the voter *intended* to defraud.

Recall also that Franken was the 60th Senator that sustained ObamaCare as legislation, which we are now stuck with. So Democratic voting fraud has produced nearly catastrophic consequences.

How Democratically controlled legislatures can maintain loose voting rules in a number of states is astonishing. Especially since photo ID has been sustained by the US Supreme Court.

Further invitations to fraud are embedded in other Democratic proposals such as “same day registration” and “universal voter registration”. The latter is particularly pernicious, as the voter registration rolls would be newly populated by driving license lists or tax lists.

We know that many states don't check citizen status on new driver license requests, and all legal aliens (but non-citizens) have to pay income taxes. Sorting “legal” versus “non-citizen” out on Election Day would be a nightmare, and the Democrats know it.

Then, there is the Dream Act and even other remedies to giving illegal aliens a right to stay and work in this country by getting them out of the “shadows.” Indirectly giving them the potential to vote without checking thoroughly is a blueprint for a Democratic takeover of the entire election process that could dominate even not so close elections.

Do We Give Up on the “47%”

In the Q&A session, this topic brought a spirited response from Fund. This refers to Romney's off camera seemingly giving up on the 47% who pay no income taxes and therefore maybe have a vested interest in a bigger federal government, which is the liberals' mantra.

Fund's reaction was animated. First of all, don't give your opponents a tag line that you don't care about the lower economic strata. Next, many seeming liberal groups don't even vote liberal.

Over 40% of the liberal National Education Association Union vote Republican. The union officials are of course in bed with the Liberals, and are a major funding source, but many teachers are unhappy with the liberal solutions that don't really help students but perpetuate union power.

Even those in lower income strata believe in the American dream of working hard and bettering themselves. Working hard and the government punishing you with confiscatory taxes go against the beliefs of many. Ronald Reagan won the support of many former Democratic groups by his positive view of America's future with less punishing regulation and even a populist notion of less government intrusion.

Is the TEA Party a Positive or Negative to Republican Goals?

Fund also felt strongly about this myth that the TEA Party may have sabotaged some Republican legislative seats. First of all, even the TEA party candidates won fairly and squarely in primary battles and have a right to seek election. Next the legislative losses in November were across all big tent Republican candidate categories. Some of the establishment candidates had major gaffes that the Democrats exploited.

The answer is for Republicans to analyze Democratic tactics and have a successful strategy to combat them.

Is Hillary Clinton Invincible in the 2016 Election?

She's not even a lock to get the nomination (especially if you believe in the "endless blind date" philosophy of the Democratic nomination process). And she was not so invincible in her loss to a relatively complete unknown in the 2008 primaries.

Is the Movement to Much More Early Voting Good for America?

Not according to John Fund. Some states allowed it to begin even before the first debate. Why not just allow permanent block voting no matter which candidates emerge. Not good for a representative democracy. Early voting perhaps should require a reason from the voter as to why they need to do it. At best, have it after the last debates. If one is going to be out of town on Election Day, there is also absentee ballots. However, Fund was quite skeptical on the latter, because the voting takes place with no scrutiny, and has much more potential for fraud.

Is the Ben Carson Movement for Real?

His YouTube video at the National Prayer Breakfast has now gone viral. With President Obama sitting only a few feet away, this success story of a child from abject poverty becoming a world-class surgeon by eschewing traditional liberal ideas has made Dr. Carson a hero among conservatives. Especially since he appeared to be "lecturing" Obama on the dais on Obama's false dreams for how to create success for minorities and the downtrodden.

According to Fund, Dr. Carson has no interest in running for office, but Fund predicted the soon to retire doctor may be a major force for conservatism in the future. Especially with his views on education and on how to reform ObamaCare drastically.

Final Perspective – Look to the States

Who would have predicted that a heavy union state like Michigan would pass a Right to Work Law? The next few elections may be heavily influenced by the success stories emerging in many individual states led by now thirty Republican governors. The contrast with failures in Democratic stronghold such as California, Illinois and New York has to have an effect on the minds of the electorate.

Articulating that narrative will be key to future national elections as well as understanding the true reasons for the losses in the last election.