

## Ronald Regan Is Dead

Written for PolitickerMD.com 5/21/2008

I became a registered Republican in 2003. It was because I finally became disappointed with the Democrats over how they were behaving in Annapolis. The more I did research, the more disenchanted I became with the party. From the nitpicking and partisan bickering with Governor Robert Ehrlich (R) to their attempts to raise taxes (which they succeeded in this past November.) Then there was the fact that they took the black vote for granted. They would promise a number of things and not worry about delivering the goods when the time came.

I became a Republican because they were at the very least more honest about what they stood for. Oh, and that whole anti-slavery thing helped as well. The Republicans acknowledge that they were wrong to play racial politics, but the conservative base was honest about their stance on Affirmative Action. Not every person in a political party agrees with each other, but they have core values that unite them. Let me be clear, I DID NOT become Republican because of Ronald Reagan.

This is a problem I must point out with the Republicans because I feel that they are in better position to improve than the Democrats. Yes, Ronald Reagan was a good President. The greatest in my book however is Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln had the ultimate and moral call to preserve the union (and he did.) Reagan was inspiring, but I am sorry, Ronald Reagan is dead and the party needs to stop turning him into an idol.

Furthermore, the obsession most Republicans have with Ronald Reagan is getting to the same dangerous level as Democrats with evoking the civil rights era towards black voters. In both instances, both sides are looking back to the future instead of looking forward. Young voters cannot relate to the experiences of the civil rights era because we were not even a thought at that time. Many of us were somewhere between being babies or being kids during the time Reagan was in office (in my case ages newborn to eight years old.)

Most of my more conservative friends always talk about how we need a Reagan Conservative in office. Then they proceed to talk about how great he is. Not that I have a problem with them explaining why they like Reagan, like I said, looking back I thought he was good president. But the keyword is that they were looking for a "Reagan" Conservative, not a good or well-qualified conservative.

There has been a lot of talk about the branding of the Republican Party as of late and what needs to be done to restore the brand. The top priority for the party should be to return to its core message of a strong national defense and a smaller government. After that, is to be honest, upright and practice what we preach. I hung my head in shame when Newt Gingrich, Tom DeLay and Mark Foley were very vocal in the issues that would

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become their downfall. Those downfalls made me look real bad in explaining my party of choice, especially about the "they are more honest" part.

Overall, it's time for Republicans to let the past be the past. Reagan was chosen for a particular time when the country needed him. That was in the 1980s. It is now 2008. No one is mentioning the word De Lorean these days and MTV is not playing as much music as it did during that time (assuming they do have any music shows left on the network.) Most young voters these days are sitting on the fence as independent. Now is a ripe time to reach out to the future rather than the past.