



# COUNCIL FOR NATIONAL POLICY

## POLICY COUNSEL

**“A HOUSE DIVIDED”**  
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MR ERICKSON: Let me just give you a little more about my background. I grew up in Dubai. My dad and my mom lived in Louisiana. When I was five we moved to Dubai and we moved back to the states when I was 15. It was an eye-opening experience. My dad worked for an oil company. I have still been to more countries than states. I moved to Georgia. I met my wife. As long as my mother is still alive she'll never move back to Louisiana so I decided to stay in Georgia with her. And we have two wonderful kids.

I would like to thank CNP for this trip. Last week we did get four inches of snow in Macon. Atlanta only got an inch. We live an hour and a half south and we got four inches. We don't have sleds in South Georgia; we don't have a need for them. So my wife got the cookie sheets out and took the kids down the hill behind our house. My wife decided to do it as well and she's a little heavier than the kids so she got a little more momentum than the kids and jumped the curb and the rim of the cookie sheet cracked her tailbone as she jumped the curb and hit the road and she kept going across the road and into the neighbor's yard and then finally stopped. She is fine but she dropped the kids off at her parents so she's having a vacation. I'm having a vacation. The kids are having a vacation - all in separate places. It's been really quiet in my room.

Those of you who read me regularly know that I focus a lot more on the conservative movement these days. I got involved in politics just randomly back in 1993. I went to Mercer. My mother insisted I go check out the small Baptist College in Georgia. So I did and they were very nice. And I stayed at Mercer. And in my freshman year my feminist freshman studies program professor, who would breastfeed her four year old in front of us, insisted that we go to a gay bar and pretend to be gay so that we can experience discrimination against gays. I just refused and so she told me I couldn't pass the class. We were supposed to be a Baptist College. So I did what any thinking student at a Baptist school would do. I sneaked and stole a copy of the Board of Trustees of the University and called every single one of the members of the board who had an REV in front of their name. I wound up agreeing that I would take a B in the class and never go back. So that involved me in politics. I then went on and started the College Republicans at Mercer and the rest is history.

I was a great card-carrying member of the Republican Party for a long time. I got myself elected to City Council in Macon, Georgia. My only issue was human trafficking which was a huge issue in middle Georgia. I got elected and was there for 3½ years of a four-year term. And when CNN came calling and asked if I would come to work for them and then radio studio called and I had to do radio at night. I had to resign my seat. Part-time city Council or a full-time job on TV and radio -- it was not a hard choice. Local politics is far nastier than anything at the federal level, I tell you that. When you get ambushed in the grocery store by the guy down the street whose

trash didn't get picked up when it was supposed to get picked up, it can be a nasty thing. I've spent a lot of time now focusing on the conservative movement in the divisions within the Republican Party from a source you might not expect. I'd like to read you what I think is a great description of what is happening among the Republicans and conservatives today and why the fight that we have as conservatives has to be as much focused on Republicans as it is all Democrats. Galatians chapter 2, beginning at verse 11, "But when Cephas came to Antioch I opposed him to his face because he stood condemned. Because before certain men came from James he was eating with the Gentiles. But when they came he drew back and separated himself fearing the circumcision party and the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. But when I saw to their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel I said to Cephas before them all, if you, though a Jew, live Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?" Now some people get mad at me for bringing my faith and Scripture into politics but it is kind of my worldview, so I do. This is a perfect description of what is happening with the Republican Party. Think about Paul's situation. Paul was out killing the Christians before his conversion on the road to Damascus. Peter is the guy Jesus said was his rock. And Paul, the guy who had been persecuting the Christians, is having to confront the guy Jesus said is his rock and telling him you're not acting how you're supposed to act. I mean Peter is the head of the church. Some of you, of one denomination, say he was the first Pope. He is a big deal. And here is this guy who's been killing his friends who has his conversion and having to hold the big guy accountable. Now, I see this playing out within the Republican Party and in the conservative movement. But we've got a lot of people from Washington to come down here and look you in the eye and say I love the babies. And you all say, well praise Jesus, go vote the right way. And they go up to Washington and they love the babies and then they give the baby \$17 trillion in national debt to pay off. That does not love the babies. I mean we have a lot of people who say I love Jesus and I love the kids and I'm pro-life, and their pro-life statist. They grow the party, they grow the government, we have a group of people in Washington who have been campaigning for three years now saying we will fight on Obamacare, on the debt ceiling. They said it in 2013 and in January 2013 John Cornyn, this senator from Texas, said we may have to shut down the government if the president won't negotiate with us on the debt ceiling. In the summer of 2013 the Republican said let's not pick a budget fight and risk shutting down the government let's pick a fight on the debt ceiling over Obamacare because we were successful and got sequestration the last time we did it. In October the government shutdown and John Boehner said this is ridiculous. We shouldn't have done this. We should fight on the debt ceiling. It's now February 2014 and John Boehner says debt ceiling lets pass it clean. Who is holding these guys accountable? I was a card-carrying, I still am, and I was an elected Republican. I supported Republicans, I campaigned for Republicans, I still do. Better the bad guy who supports life than the good guy who doesn't. There is a big difference in your worldview when you believe that every life isn't sacred and life isn't sacred until you take it home from the hospital. There is a big difference in that. But I can't reconcile supporting a lot of guys, who many of us know, that are 1° away from Ronald Reagan. By God when they first ran Ronald Reagan appeared in their campaign commercials so we've got to support these guys who have been there when they were in charge of the White House and the Congress. What did we get? We stayed safe. God bless President Bush for keeping us safe but we also got steel tariffs in Pennsylvania, no child left behind, that opened the door for common core. We got \$10 trillion in national debt. We got Medicare part D, we almost got this ridiculous immigration reform. We almost got Harriet Myers. We got TARP. We got the General Motors bailout. And for a long

time you had members of the conservative movement turning their back to it, turning a blind eye to it. Saying, well, he kept us safe. He kept us safe. They all kept us safe. They got us right into the safe arms of China. And that's who we are indebted to now. So I look on this as a great disappointment. And I look to a lot of my conservative friends around the country and say we just need to win. Let's put this fight aside and let's just get our guys back in charge of the Senate and House. I believe the past is a great indicator of the future and I look at the past, what they did when they were in charge of the House and the Senate. I look at the indictments. I look at the debt. I look at the legislation. I look at the guys who come here, because I've been to meetings before where I've heard them say they support limited government, they want to roll back the Leviathan. and then I hear them in Washington, D.C. and they say just let us be in charge of the Leviathan. You got a bunch of Republicans in Washington who think the problem isn't government. The problem is Democrats in charge of it. The problem is all of them in charge of government. You know I'm an Evangelical Christian. The reason I support small government is because every single one of us in this room is a sinner and I want as few of you in charge of me as possible. That's it. I don't understand these guys who go to Washington and think they can be in charge of the Leviathan. The Leviathan consumes us all. We are all sinners. We've all fallen short of the glory of God. I've got a difficult time controlling myself in this world, controlling my kids in the world. Controlling the government? The hour is late in the fight whether we want to believe it or not. You know with the Internet these days, Justin Bieber, any day now, Jesus is coming back. I can tell you we are on our last days and we can't suffer through this for much longer. You know I'm ready to go. But until we go we have an obligation to be faithful stewards. And we are not doing that good of a job of it because we're not holding our friends accountable. We got a lot of people who want to be Peter. I was the guy that Jesus said was the rock. I was the guy Ronald Reagan laid his hands on. He appeared in my commercials. Let me be in charge. We need a lot more Paul's and a few less Peters in this movement, frankly. We need a lot more people willing to hold our side accountable. We need a lot more people willing to stand up and say I love you, you're a friend, but you're wrong. We've got these races around the country now where you had the National Republican Senatorial and Congressional Committees blocking conservative consultants for daring to help conservatives. Think about that for a minute. They are shutting them out of business. You have Mitch McConnell picking sides in Nebraska solely because one of the candidates has the support of conservatives. So he's with the other guy. it doesn't make that guy a bad guy but the Republicans in Washington, the lobbyists, some of whom are supporting Obamacare, are with one side in Nebraska solely because the Club for Growth, Red State, Senate Conservatives Fund, and others are with the other guy. That is kind of absurd. You got races around the country where we have got to change our own party because if we don't change the Republican Party we are not going to be able to change Washington and if we don't change Washington we are not going to change America. You know, I look at these races around the country and I look at the primaries around the country and there are a lot of Republicans who want to sit on the sidelines and they think will let the voters handle it and will support the rubble. My own philosophy has always been vote for the conservative in the primary and then vote for the Republican in the general. And no, no, no, no, not vote for the most conservative guy that can win the primary. That is what liberals in Washington tell us to back the bad guys. I mean God bless William F. Buckley for saying that but listen to the Republicans in Washington, D.C. The conservative who can win the primary is the guy who is not a conservative. That is what it's become. I mean look at these races around the country.

Let me tell you a story. A couple of years ago there was a senator who was behind in the polls. He wasn't doing too well. He was up in age and the Senate Republicans went to him led by Mitch McConnell and said, "You've got to get out of the race. You've got to go. Your polling is bad. Your favorability's are bad. You don't have what it takes. You're getting old. You need to go." And so he left. There is a guy this time; he is the weakest Republican in Washington. He's got 30% favorability in his own state. He is four points behind the Democratic opponent nine months before the election. And by the way, there have been a series of polls independent and partisan and they all have him behind the opponent. Why aren't the Republicans going to him? Because he's in the exact same position on favorability and polling and time from the election as the guy the Republican asked a couple of years ago to leave so that they can protect the state. Why aren't they coming to this guy and asking him to leave? Because he is Mitch McConnell. And so we may lose the Senate because of pride. His opponent in the Republican primary had ten kids, one of them died. They are all homeschooled and he doesn't have a TV in the house because he doesn't want pop-culture intruding in their lives. That's my kind of guy -- Matt Bevin. Now my wife and I, full disclosure, we have a TV in the house and we call it babysitter. You know we've got to hold our own side accountable and we are not always going to disagree on the same side, let's not mince words. Some of you may like someone and I may not like that person. We may all choose to disagree on directions to go but we still have to hold our own side accountable. We have given them a pass for a long time because of the war. Well you know what? They now tell us Al Qaeda is not a threat while it continues to plot to kill us. They now tell us that Washington is not a threat because they'll be in charge of it. Washington is always a threat. We've got to hold our own side accountable. If there is one thing that I can encourage you to do it is hold our side accountable. I know these people are some of your friends and their some of my friends too, but if we are not willing to hold our friends accountable, if we are not willing to chastise each other when we are wrong, the other side will. We have seen this happen in 2006, when we as conservatives didn't stand up and say we do need to clean house. We have gotten lazy. We have gotten intellectually shallow.

I wrote a book a couple years ago. It was the most awful experience writing a book. Some of you have written books. I'm sorry. I hated every minute of writing this book. It wound up being an okay book but one of the excerpts I found was from back in 2003. Fred Barnes in *The Wall Street Journal* when there were questions about whether George Bush was conservative or not he actually wrote in *The Wall Street Journal*, yes he's conservative, he's just a big Government conservative. He believes that governments can do things compassionately for people. No part of conservative involves the word big government. I'm sorry. It just doesn't. The bigger the government the more your rights can get taken away more quickly. People are learning now. I had a guy call into my radio show three nights ago. His name was T.J. He's been dating a woman for eight years. So I asked the obvious question why not get married? She has five kids. That wasn't the reason he didn't want to get married to her. They've been dating for eight years. Her first husband had died and so she and the kids were getting Social Security and if she got remarried then she would lose that money. Oh, but it gets better. She is also on food stamps and welfare and if they got married she would lose that. She is a registered nurse and has never worked. Her mother was on welfare and food stamps and now her kids who are over the age of 21 are on welfare and food stamps. She has finally gotten a job. He convinced her she should start using her nursing degree. She has finally gotten a job at a hospital and so he was calling to tell me she got her first paycheck and she didn't understand why the amount of money that went

into her checking account was not equal to the amount on the check. She didn't know that was the way it worked. The real world dawned, the woman who went from voting for Barack Obama and the Democrats has decided to vote for the Republicans. So I told T.J. - good luck with that. She has to pay attention to which Republican she votes for. We've got to pay attention to which Republican we vote for. This is a great group assembled here today, but I have to tell you the impression that I had coming in to CNP the very first time I got asked to speak was that this is a group that is only concerned with social issues. A lot of people come in and they talk about that. And I know you're not now. I know the group. I know many of you. And I know you're concerned about the future of the country. And I know we have a lot of great candidates who like us support life but we've got to support liberty too to get the pursuit of happiness. We've got to support limiting the government. We have got to support candidates who limit government. So I would just ask you going forward, and then I'll take as many questions as you want, but before I do I have to tell you what I found out about Wendy Davis yesterday. I would just ask you to use some real discernment about the candidates you are going to support this year. Just because they've been in Washington, doesn't mean they are entitled to our support. Incumbency is not an indicator of good behavior in the future and it is not a requisite for support. I would tell you, we've got to start supporting the people who are committed to rolling back the Leviathan not just managing it better than the Democrats. So use your discernment in the primaries. I have to tell you about Wendy Davis. Yes, I did coin the term "abortion Barbie." I do not make apologies for calling her abortion Barbie. I saw polling in Texas that 60 some percent of Hispanic voters in Texas between 18 and 30 would not vote for a candidate, regardless of party, if they thought their only issue was abortion. So abortion Barbie. Ask people in Texas now what they connote to Wendy Davis. Guess what comes up? It has worked very well. It's primary season, the runoffs, early voting starts soon in Texas for the primaries, so all the media groups are out polling. A new media poll has come out yesterday. Wendy Davis is actually losing Democrats in the San Antonio media market. Now there's a story here relevant for this group. The only people who have been running ads in the San Antonio media market against Wendy Davis is Texas Right to Life. And they have been running ads in Spanish about her abortion record. You and I both know darn well that our own party, that most of us are affiliated with, when we get into the general election is going to say we can't run on social issues. It doesn't work. We know from Virginia now that when Ken Cuccinelli began to swing back, it was him swinging back attacking on the abortion issue. We have a lot of people invested in our party right now who talk like us and walk like us and come to our meetings who aren't like us. They know how to take advantage of itching ears within our own side and they betray us behind closed doors. And they want us not to talk about traditional marriage and they want us to not talk about life. They think that these issues turn off millennial's. Millennial's are the most pro-life demographic in the country. There are very few people in this country who think that once a child can feel pain that it's okay to terminate the life. And yet for some reason a lot of people on our side say don't talk about it anymore. In Texas that issue is working for us. In Virginia it started helping us. We can't run away from that issue and we really should not be putting it in rooms with the candidate consultant class who says don't talk about this issue because it burns bridges. It does not burn bridges. You know what, lastly with five seconds left on my stopwatch before I take questions, let me say this. If burning bridges is what it takes, I know there is a last day and those of us who are on the winning team win on the last day and I'm far more interested in being on the winning team on the last day than being on the winning team right now. Thank you.

ATTENDEE: We hear you in the media and on radio and the Internet, what is the most powerful media that we can invest in today to try to get our message out?

MR. ERICKSON: Most powerful media? I will tell you I think that conservatives don't do well on the Internet still. It is very interesting and one of my frustrations for a long time is that Eagle Publishing bought Red State several years ago. It is a story in of itself. It just got sold to Salem which is a for profit corporation. The Left has for years on the Internet had the ACLU, the AFLCO, the SCIU, NARAL now all of them buying overpriced ads on websites on the left and then taking the tax write off for the advertising cost to subsidize the Left. I have been in tons of meetings for a long time with conservative donors saying what is my rate of return if I put this ad on your site? How many clicks am I going to get? Are you interested in clicks or are you interested in saving the country? Now I don't say that self-interestedly. There is a corporation that takes care of Red State now, although I'm sure that they would love the advertising. But I tell you the Left gets it. It is one of the most frustrating things to sit in a meeting with a lot of conservative donors wanting to know when they are going to get their investment back. They are going to get their investment back by saving the country. The left does not think like that. Now to some degree that is smart on the Right. We continue to make money and the Left continues to throw it all away on Mammon but at the same time, the Internet has not been a tool that the Right has been able to harness because too many of the people who write the checks on the Right are too interested in getting their money back in a year as opposed to getting the country back in three.

ATTENDEE: You were one of the early folks to find some exciting candidates who went on to win their primaries and go on to be elected and are serving office today as constitutional conservatives. Who are some of the folks that you see right now who are positioning themselves for the 2014 race and names that we should watch out for?

MR. ERICKSON: One who is actually here, Barry Loudermilk, I'm going to a reception for him tomorrow afternoon. There are several great people in his race that is in Georgia 11. I'm supporting him because in his state legislative career he had a habit of telling his own side no. Frankly, that is what I am looking for -- Republicans that have a habit of telling Republicans no. Honestly, if you want to change Washington, and I don't mean to ruffle feathers in the room, but the number one race in America today if you really want to change Washington is Matt Bevin in Kentucky. If you want to change Washington then you have to change the Republicans and if you want to change the Republicans, scare them by picking off the first leader of a party in a primary in over 100 years. I like Chad McDaniels. He's from Mississippi and he's really good. I like him a lot. And I realize that Thad Cochran is the incumbent Republican there but he has been there for a while. Around the country there are great groups. You know honestly you still have to support Greg Abbott in Texas. I mean he's going to be the nominee but he has got to be supported against "abortion Barbie." And Nikki Haley in South Carolina as well, some of these incumbents who are out there. I keep a list at Red State of a lot of the races that I am interested in around the country. I invite them to the Red State gathering. To give you an idea of some of the candidates that I have supported, I started supporting Marco Rubio in February 2009 when he was at three percentage points in the poll and everyone thought that I was crazy. Ted Cruz, I started supporting him when he was at .5 percentage points in Texas. Nikki Haley, we supported her. Bobby Jindal, we supported him. There are a great group of Republican incumbents and I

don't want to diminish them. But around the country we do have some great challengers. If you go to Red State you'll see it by the top. From around the country, we've got some really good solid candidates who are shaping up. And you know we got to defend some guys to. Some guys we don't actually like all the time. Justin Amish in Michigan sometimes just baffles me the way he votes but they're coming to get him. They want to take him out because he's actually been voting to limit government. We had one of the candidates in Nebraska speak at a reception last night -- Ben Sass.

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