

The Truth about Reagan's Big Tent



My opponent has invoked Ronald Reagan's "big tent" Republican Party, calling for return to this philosophy. I agree—with Reagan. But my opponent's actions show a fundamental misunderstanding of what Reagan actually meant.

Reagan's "big tent" was **never** about open primaries, recruiting people who reject Republican principles, or publicly attacking fellow Republicans—especially during primaries. And Reagan was especially clear about standards of conduct for local party members and volunteers.

Let me quote Reagan directly:

"The Republican Party is a broad party. There is room in our tent for many views... but let no one, however, interpret this to mean compromise of basic philosophy or that we will be all things to all people."

Reagan welcomed debate over **methods and approaches**, but no over core beliefs. And once decisions were made he demanded unity:

"if our philosophy is to prevail, we must at least pledge unified support of the ultimate decision... **It is the duty of the volunteer Republican organization not to further divide, but to lead the way to unity. It is not your duty... to tear down, or attempt to destroy, others in the tent.**"

He spoke even more plainly about primaries:

"Thou shall not speak ill of any Republican. Our task is harder (in the general election) if we must challenge and refute charges made by our opponents if those charges were first uttered by us."

Reagan would be appalled by the use of his "big-tent" language to rip up philosophical stakes and throw the doors wide open. He did **not** condone walkouts from party elections, refusal to support state party platforms, disregard for party rules or the law, or primary attacks that support Democrat arguments in the general election.

Reagan's plea was the opposite; set aside disputes over tactics or personalities in favor of shared, foundational principles. As he said:

"(We can) no longer afford the luxury of internal fighting, backbiting, and throat-cutting... our philosophical difference (Democrats) is greater than any grudge or split within our own ranks."

I agree wholeheartedly. ‘

The battle for a free and prosperous Idaho is real. To win we must unite around shared principles, not ego, not power struggles, and not chaos. Our only argument must be with those who reject core Republican principles, not with fellow Republicans who share them.

My opponent has misconstrued Reagan’s big-tent philosophy, using it to justify inviting those who do not share our values in the front while pushing fellow-Republicans out the back, all while demeaning, seeking to defund, and wasting local party funds to frivolously sue our state Republican Party. Meanwhile, I have lived Reagan’s big tent philosophy—working to build positive relationships that bridge the divide, delivering results for our district, and advancing core Republican principles at home and in Boise.

I ask for your support to continue doing so as your state representative in the Republican primary election on May 21st.

Kind regards,
Julianne Young

