

O P I N I O N



Jonah Goldberg

“The Trump base is far bigger & stronger than ever before,” the president declared in a series of tweets Monday morning, and that “will never change.” Many observers were quick to point out that this assertion isn’t borne out in the polls.

Such nitpicking, however, overlooks a more important part of this story. In the 1990s and 2000s, Trump had political ambitions, but the traditional two-party system and the media landscape served as impenetrable barriers. It was the breakdown of the old ways that opened a path for someone interested in breaking them down even more — in part by embracing a new base of mostly non-college-educated whites.

Traditionally, Republicans have relied on white, middle-class, white-collar, married suburbanites. The American Communities Project identifies 106 “urban suburbs” — the relatively affluent near-in suburbs of major cities. In 1984, Ronald Reagan won 92 of them. In 2016, Trump lost 89.

As Politico’s Charlie Mahtesian recently chronicled, Republicans have been steadily losing market share in these crucial districts and counties for decades, as suburbanites become a bit more liberal and a lot more hostile to Republican populism on cultural issues.

Just as inexorably, the Democrats have been watching white, blue-collar workers, the heart of the old Franklin D. Roosevelt alliance, migrate to the GOP for some time now. Democrats bet heavily on the growth of minorities, particularly the black vote, urban liberals, immigrants and millennials. This coalition delivered two historic victories for Barack Obama.

But opposition to Obama accelerated the defection of rural, working-class and older whites to the GOP cause, costing Democrats 63 House seats and roughly 1,000 elected offices nationwide.

Now, both parties have similar dilemmas: Their new bases are too small to guarantee electoral success but too strong to allow fundamental rethinking of how the parties do business.

hard-core liberals and Trump “resisters” is not a majority coalition. But it is the dominant ideological force within the party (and mainstream media), and hence the leadership is very reluctant to broaden the party’s message. The new push for zero tolerance of pro-life Democrats is just one obvious illustration of the bind the Democrats are in.

Trump, meanwhile, has dedicated the first six months of his presidency to keeping his base happy. That’s in part because he can’t get legislation through Congress, so he tweets red meat to the faithful instead.

His media cheerleaders increasingly define conservatism not as adherence to any program, but as personal loyalty to Trump. Hence the rising call from figures such as the recently suspended Fox News host Eric Bolling to purge the party of “RINOs” (Republicans In Name Only) who are critical of the president. If Trump had an approval rating in the high 50s instead of numbers that bounced around in the 30s, following this advice would not threaten the fragile GOP majority.

The Democrats have settled on economic populism as their unifying theme, not so much because that’s where all the passion is but because they can’t agree on any other agenda that would enlarge their coalition. The GOP, in turn, is shrinking its ideological commitments — and appeal — and focusing instead on populist rage and the president’s cult of personality. Both courses leave vast swaths of the electorate up for grabs.

As a result, there’s the potential for an opening in 2020 for some opportunistic figure — Mark Zuckerberg? Michael Bloomberg? — from outside the beleaguered and sclerotic party system who could forge a coalition from both the traditional Democratic and Republican columns, much as Emmanuel Macron did in France. An independent candidate always seemed like a pipe dream in America’s two-party system. But so did Trump’s candidacy until not very long ago.

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The Democratic base of

Letters to the Editor...

The Nugget welcomes contributions from its readers, which must include the writer’s name, address and phone number. Letters to the Editor is an open forum for the community and contains unsolicited opinions not necessarily shared by the Editor. The Nugget reserves the right to edit, omit, respond or ask for a response to letters submitted to the Editor. Letters should be no longer than 300 words. Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned. The deadline for all letters is noon Monday.

To the Editor:

Regarding this inflated story of “Mayor under scrutiny” I would like to shed some light since I actually witnessed this event.

This “over 50 petite woman” was not so innocent while walking by reading her mail. She deliberately stood in front of the Ryan’s home with her cell phone out taking a video. She clearly has an agenda; now she is playing the victim card.

Please keep in mind that she had the audacity to post it on a website.

I have lived in this neighborhood over 15 years and I have seen a bit of stuff; however, I do know this: The Ryans are decent people and deserve better than what they are being dished.

Michele Williams
Coyote Springs

To the Editor:

Congratulations to Skydive Awesome on establishing their new headquarters at Madras where they have acres and acres of safe and scenic landing zones for the parachutists, well away from residential areas and obstacles.

We wish them well.

And thank you to Sisters Eagle Airport personnel for facilitating the relocation. Skies over our neighborhoods have been wonderfully peaceful with only the ordinary coming and going of local planes and visitors.

For this we are deeply appreciative.
Suzanne Pepin



To the Editor:

I often sit back in silent, idle agreement

See **LETTERS** on page 24

Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Sunny 92/57	Mostly sunny 91/58	Mostly sunny 87/55	Mostly sunny 88/54	Mostly sunny 83/51	Mostly sunny 79/na

The Nugget Newspaper, Inc.

Website: www.nuggetnews.com
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Postmaster: Send address changes to
The Nugget Newspaper,
P.O. Box 698, Sisters, OR 97759.
Third Class Postage Paid at Sisters, Oregon.

Publisher - Editor: Kiki Dolson
News Editor: Jim Cornelius
Production Manager: Leith Easterling
Classifieds & Circulation: Teresa Mahnken
Advertising: Karen Kassy
Graphic Design: Jess Draper
Proofreader: Pete Rathbun
Accounting: Erin Bordonaro

The Nugget is mailed to residents within the Sisters School District; subscriptions are available outside delivery area. Third-class postage: one year, \$45; six months (or less), \$25. First-class postage: one year, \$85; six months, \$55.

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