

A Conversation with GARY BAUER

A conservative and pro-family activist and former policy advisor to Ronald Reagan, Gary Bauer has been at the center of conservative policy battles for over three decades. In this conversation, Bauer recalls how he first became interested in politics as a teenager fighting corruption in Northern Kentucky. Kristol and Bauer also discuss Bauer's advocacy of conservative principles in domestic and foreign affairs from the Reagan era until today. Considering contemporary American politics, Bauer argues for a reinvigorated, pro-Main Street conservatism.

On Main Street conservatism, Bauer says: I bristle at how often conservatism gets linked with corporations that are in bed with big government. When I look at those corporations, I seldom see them doing anything that I would define as friendly to conservatism. I hope our future presidential candidates talk a lot more about the workers in America and the middle class in America than they do about the corporate suites of America.

On conventional wisdom and the Republicans, Bauer says: I've always felt that it's the perception of the Republican economic agenda, and by linkage, the conservative economic agenda, that holds us back – not our foreign policy views, not our views on values or on marriage, the sanctity of life, and many other things that the conventional wisdom says is the reason we're not winning elections.

On foreign policy, Bauer says: A conservatism that avoids any neo-isolationist tendencies is extremely important. We had a whole generation of Republicans in the 1930s who lost any chance for political careers because they made an isolationist case that might have fit the tenor of the times, but after Pearl Harbor they looked like fools...And I certainly wouldn't want to see Republicans make that mistake today.

Chapters in GARY BAUER Conversation

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