



Written by Ann Canedy

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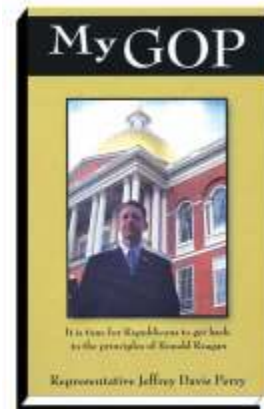
It is time for Republicans to get back to the principles of Ronald Reagan

By Representative Jeffrey Davis Perry

Perry Books, East Sandwich, 2009

Softcover, 329 pages, \$19.95

Fifth Barnstable District State Representative Jeffrey Perry's book at first blush might be cynically viewed by some as a self-indulgent treatise on one man's personal political view. After all, the title is *My GOP* and the author unabashedly declares that it is intended as a one-sided view – his view - of the current climate on Beacon Hill and Capitol Hill and the Republican Party's successes and failures and reasons for each. It bluntly bashes those, including this reviewer, who think of themselves as Republicans but, in the author's view, have departed from the Party's core values on social and moral issues, thus contributing, perhaps causing, the Party's demise. We could argue with that one.



But read on. This is a book of fascinating insight –both into the man who wrote it and the history of the Party. It clearly underlines why Massachusetts has regained its moniker of “Taxachusetts,” is near the bottom in the nation in job growth, always one of the last states to recover from recession, and is one of the few states with stagnant population growth. In informative detail, Representative Perry defines the often-corrupt behavior of backroom Beacon Hill politics and enumerates broken promises to the electorate, paralleling the pitfalls of this one-party-rule state with the current climate in Washington. He describes the often-frustrating struggles of a hearty band of 16 Republicans in an overwhelmingly Democratic state Legislature and the impact that dynamic has on all of us. To be sure, it is a call to the Party faithful to reevaluate and embrace once again core Party principles and values, but it is also a wake-up call for those who call themselves “Independents” (unenrolled) or “Democrats.”

Representative Perry's book is a must read for any Republican wannabe candidate. A very electable, likeable, dedicated *elect*ed Republican in his own right, he shares his formula for success on a politically outnumbered playing field. Those of us who know him credit much of his success to his tireless dedication, excellent communication skills, and unparalleled constituent service. He, however, rightfully points out that it most likely is due in large part to his clear

understanding of core principles and his unflinching allegiance to them.

This book should not be ignored by Democrats or Independents, however. One of the more fascinating analyses Representative Perry undertakes is why some self-titled Democrats espouse clear Republican principles but pull the Democrat lever because that is a label they have inherited or been brought up under. At one point in history, they were called “Reagan Democrats.” Representative Perry argues that the failure of the Republican Party to counter negative inferences and labels by sticking to clear, identified Republican principles (conservation: Teddy Roosevelt; human dignity: Abraham Lincoln; civil rights: Chief Justice Earl Warren, author of *Brown v. Board of Education*; patriotism and “Peace through Strength:” Ronald Reagan; lower taxes, less government, and supply side economics) has contributed to this disconnect.

My advice? Start with “We Have A Proud History,” which is placed toward the end of the book and approach the rest with a clear perspective and an open mind. It is worth reading, and we all might learn something.

The reviewer is an elected member of the Barnstable Town Council and a former Republican candidate for state representative from the 2nd Barnstable District