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After the March 3 Republican Debate in Detroit CHQ Chairman Richard A. Viguerie observed



that only two things could defeat Donald Trump; a united conservative movement or Donald Trump.

As Mr. Viguerie observed:

"The Washington D.C. Establishment, including Democrats, Republicans and the establishment media, lack credibility with Republican votes to halt the rise of Trump even as he threatens their

power and control. In fact, each time the establishment (especially the establishment media) attacks Trump, it drives his support higher. Only the conservative movement has the credibility to attack and define Trump.

"...Donald Trump is perfectly capable of destroying his own campaign or at least doing serious damage to his prospects by not being presidential in his rhetoric or actions. But so far his childish bickering and other un-Presidential actions (including actions that indicate he could not only be irresponsible, but dangerous to conservative ideas of constitutional liberty) have not taken the wind out of his sails."

"Conservatives at the national, state and local levels have a responsibility in the time remaining to stop Donald Trump by exposing his anti-conservative record." Up until this past week it looked like neither one of those conditions was going to be met, and it also looked like the math of delegate accumulation was beginning to favor Donald Trump so heavily that the Republican presidential nomination was within his grasp.

Then came Wisconsin and a series of gaffes, rookie campaign errors and meltdowns that far exceeded the high standard Mr. Viguerie set for Trump to implode his own campaign.

The arrest of Trump's campaign manager Corey Lewandowski for grabbing a female reporter, and Trump's ridiculous attempts to lie and tweet Lewandowski out of the rap in the face of clear video evidence that he did indeed grab Michelle Fields drove Trump's already-underwater numbers with women even lower.

But Donald Trump hit the limit of his stream of consciousness campaign with the truly bizarre statement that women who have an abortion should somehow be punished if abortion is illegal.

Here's the transcript of what Trump said in the exchange with Chris Matthews:

"I am pro-life," Mr. Trump said after a few attempts. Asked how an abortion ban would be put in place, he said, "You go back to a position like they had where they would perhaps go to illegal places. But you have to ban it."

Finally, Mr. Matthews asked Mr. Trump, "You're about to be chief executive of the United States. Do you believe in punishment for abortion, yes or no?"

Mr. Trump responded: "The answer is there has to be some form of punishment."

"Ten days?" Mr. Matthews asked. "Ten years?"

Mr. Trump replied: "I don't know," adding, "It's a very complicated position."

Yes, Donald, it is "a very complicated position" and one that conservative ethicists and legislators have been thinking about and refining for the more than 40 years that have passed since the Supreme Court betrayed the Constitution and made *Roe v Wade* the law of the land.

As our friend Rod Dreher of *The American Conservative* put it, "This is how you know Trump hasn't thought about abortion for more than five seconds, much less has had contact with the pro-life movement. *Almost everybody in the pro-life movement rejects the idea of punishing women who abort their children.*"

But to Donald Trump it seems that nothing moves or accretes to human knowledge unless it happens inside the mind of Trump in real time.

Bad as Trump's week was on the policy and campaign management front, what may be the most important development in the Republican presidential campaign to date is happening on the ground in Wisconsin.

There, the conservative movement, led by longtime talk radio star Charlie Sykes and local conservative leaders, have come together behind Senator Ted Cruz and in opposition to Donald Trump.

"Sykes has had a big hand in creating Scott Walker and Ron Johnson, who was a nobody," Matt Batzel, executive director of the conservative advocacy group American Majority Wisconsin told POLITOCO's Eli Stokols.

Ted Cruz now holds a 10-point edge over Trump here, according to a Marquette University poll released Wednesday. "Sykes is one of the leading factors, if not the leading factor, as to why Cruz is surging," said Mark Graul, a GOP strategist here who oversaw George W. Bush's 2004 Wisconsin campaign. "The trusted, respected conservative voices in the state have been anti-Trump from the start, and they've become very pro-Cruz in the last few weeks."

"All the different factions within the conservative coalition have gotten on board in the past," said Graul according to Stokols. Trump, said Graul, "threatens that unity just with his tenor and tone, and because none of us who value conservative principles really know what he stands for."

Charlie Sykes, like many movement conservatives, is deeply unsettled by Trump's appeal and the existential crisis laid bare for conservatives and the party they have long called home.

In a blog piece we wrote months ago outlining why he would refuse to support Trump as the GOP nominee, calling the candidate a "cartoon character" of every left-wing stereotype about Republicans. "I've spent decades defending Republicans, trying to convince people that conservatives are not racists, that we're not misogynists," he said. Trump's campaign "upends everything."

Charlie Sykes is right, we urge conservatives in Wisconsin to unite behind Ted Cruz and vote for Cruz in Tuesday's Wisconsin Republican primary election.

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