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## TO DEFEAT BIDEN, REPUBLICANS COULD LOOK BACK TO 1972

by Carl Golden on May 15, 2023



Fifty-one years ago, the national Democratic Party and its presidential nominee were characterized as the party of “acid, amnesty and abortion” in one of the more devastating, effective and enduring slogans in American political history.

Its goal was the portrayal of a party in thrall to a far-left fringe element whose policies and philosophy were well out of the American mainstream and should be rejected.

Acid referred to the casual acceptance of a drug culture exemplified by the use of the hallucinogenic LSD. Amnesty referred to forgoing criminal prosecutions and allowing young men who had moved to Canada to avoid the military draft to return home. Abortion referred to legalizing the procedure on demand and without restriction.

President Nixon won re-election in a landslide in 1972 against North Dakota Sen. George McGovern, carrying 49 states. As preparations ramp up for President Joe Biden’s re-election campaign, he confronts his own version of acid, amnesty and abortion – inflation, immigration and in debt.

While lacking quite the same alliterative rhythm of the 1972 catchphrase, it could inflict a similar bite on the Biden administration if economic conditions worsen, tens of thousands of migrants continue streaming across the southern border and the nation teeters on defaulting on its debts for the first time in history.

The president enters his re-election phase with public approval around 40 percent and a clear majority expressing dissatisfaction with his handling of the economy and immigration.

Coupled with serious concerns about his age, cognition and his ability to withstand the meatgrinder presidential campaigns have become, a majority of Democrats have expressed a preference for someone else to lead their party into the 2024 election.

While inflation has eased slightly, fears of recession have increased, along with rising mortgage rates and dramatically higher costs of everything from cars to eggs.

Americans have turned increasingly to credit cards to carry them through, while the number of those who describe their situation as living paycheck to paycheck has risen. High profile bank failures have contributed to the unease in the country and a fear of what lies ahead.

The record influx of migrants has fractured Democrats as communities along the southern border deal with an unprecedented demand for social services and accommodations beyond their abilities to support.

Democrats in Congress have become increasingly outspoken in their criticisms of the administration's response, while big city mayors have bussed migrants out of their towns and into surrounding communities, citing their own shelters as at capacity and earning the enmity of their neighbors.

The administration's response has been one of blaming Congress, minimizing the situation and denying it exists while claiming the border is secure – despite overwhelming visual evidence and widely-viewed scenes of mass crowding at border crossings.

Meanwhile, the stalemate continues over increasing the national debt limit, with the president adamant in his demand for an unconditional increase. Congressional Republicans have agreed to raising the limit in return for trillions in spending cuts.

The administration has warned the government will default on its obligations as soon as the first week of June, upending the global economy and sending the country into fiscal chaos.

There remains hope that cooler heads will prevail and a compromise reached, but Biden will share much of the blame for whatever the outcome and for his perilous brinksmanship with the nation's economic health.

In 1972, McGovern led far left-wing liberalism. With the positioning of today's Democratic Party, he'd be considered a moderate.

The acid, amnesty and abortion critique was wildly successful in its time and has stood the test of political effectiveness by being cited a half century later.

It fit neatly on a bumper sticker or handheld campaign rally sign. Inflation, immigration and in debt may take up a bit more space, but the message is equally succinct.

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