

## Republicanism at Death's Door

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MADISON - When political parties die they don't suffer heart attacks. They contract terminal illnesses. The end does not come abruptly. There is advance notice.

Notice has been given. The Republican Party appears to be terminally ill.

The GOP was the party of Lincoln. It was the party of Teddy Roosevelt. The party of Eisenhower. It was a party dedicated to creating opportunity for all. Today it's given itself up to the 1%. Today's Republicans clearly have lost confidence in their ability to peddle their ideas to another 49%, and have resorted to a dizzying array of [voter suppression tactics](#) to whittle down the size of the electorate and blatant

[manipulation of political boundaries](#) in hopes of rigging election outcomes. But they still aren't sure enough people will buy the feed-the-rich, screw-the-poor policies they are selling, so they desperately turn to shameless — and shameful — appeals to racism and xenophobia to dredge up enough energy to stay alive.

Gone is Reagan's optimistic faith that our best days are ahead of us, replaced by a dark fatalism about America's decline and eventual demise. A true love of country and a sincere belief in the [inscription on the Statue of Liberty](#) have given way to paranoid obsessions with walls and borders and surveillance.

The Republican Party has lost its way. It has become a party that deserves to die.

It tends to be forgotten that parties have died before. It tends to be forgotten that the American experiment was underway for three quarters of a century before the Republican Party was born. It tends to be forgotten that the GOP's birth in the 1850s coincided with the death of one of the two major parties at the time. Slavery not only divided the nation, it divided the [Whig Party](#). The Whigs lost their leader in Illinois, none other than Abraham Lincoln, along with most of their northern supporters. The party could not survive the injury.

Like the ill-fated Whigs of the 19th Century, today's Republicans have lost their right of association with Lincoln. They no longer [sound anything like Teddy Roosevelt](#). They no longer [act anything like Eisenhower](#). They try to evoke Reagan's memory, but have grown estranged from his ways.

The signs are clear and conspicuous. The Republican Party is on the verge of flatlining.

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