

The Republican Evolution

From Governing Party to Antigovernment Party, 1860–2020

Kenneth Janda

The Republican Party was founded in 1854 to oppose slavery and its spread to new territories and states. Today, under the sway of Donald Trump, it is hardly recognizable as the party of Lincoln or even the party of Eisenhower. How and why has the Republican Party changed so drastically?

Kenneth Janda sheds new light on the Republican Party's transformations, drawing on a wide range of quantitative and qualitative evidence. He examines nearly three thousand planks from every Republican platform since 1856 as well as candidate statements and historical sources, tracing the evolution of the party's positions on topics such as states' rights, trade, taxation, regulation, law and order, immigration, environmental protection, and voting rights. Janda argues that the GOP has gone through three main phases over the course of its history, transforming from a party committed to governance to one vehemently opposed to government. In its first several decades, the Republican Party emphasized national authority and economic development. By the late 1920s, Republicans had begun downplaying the role of government in favor of a new philosophy steeped in free markets. The nomination of Barry Goldwater in 1964 marked a key turning point. Since then, the party has endorsed states' rights, opposed civil rights, and become increasingly ethnocentric. Richly documented with scores of figures and tables, *The Republican Evolution* offers new perspective on how the GOP became an antigovernment party—and whether it can step back from the brink of authoritarianism.

KENNETH JANDA is Payson S. Wild Professor Emeritus of Political Science at Northwestern University. He is the author or coauthor of numerous books, including the textbook *The Challenge of Democracy: American Government in Global Politics* (fifteenth edition, 2021), and he was coeditor of the journal *Party Politics* for two decades. Janda received the Samuel J. Eldersveld Lifetime Achievement Award for his work on political parties and the Frank J. Goodnow Award for service to the discipline, both from the American Political Science Association.

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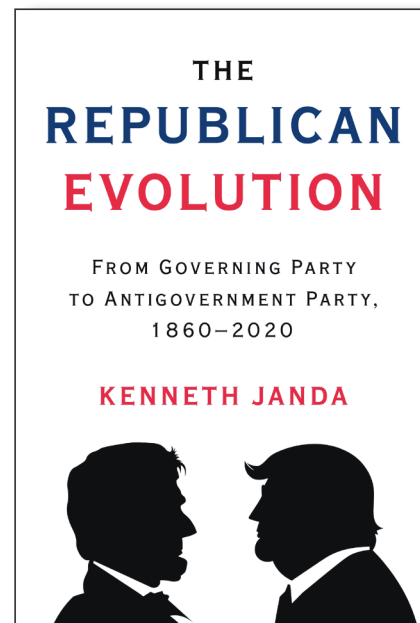
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"This fascinating study traces the Republican Party's view of the world and itself from birth to the present. Janda's scholarship provides information and insights that people of good intention can employ to save this fast-failing political institution, which in turn threatens American democracy. This book belongs on the must-read list needed to save our two-party system and our democracy."

—John W. Dean, former Nixon White House counsel, author of *Authoritarian Nightmare: Trump and His Followers*

"Outstanding! This book represents the definitive analysis of the Republican Party, its policy commitments, changes that have taken place over time, and how the party has evolved from its birth in 1856 to the cult of Trump in contemporary times. It stands out for the quality, originality, and comprehensiveness of its analysis. A tightly reasoned explanatory framework adds a historical perspective. The book sets the standard for the field."

—William Crotty, professor emeritus of political science, Northeastern University

"Janda stunningly combines scholarly discoveries with worrisome insights into the realities of contemporary politics. His research on Republican ideology from Lincoln to Trump is—in one word—the best study of party platforms ever published."

—Gerald Pomper, professor emeritus of political science, Rutgers University

"Competing political parties committed to democratic values and institutions are essential ingredients of pluralist democracy. But in recent years, as the highly respected comparative politics specialist Kenneth Janda shows, the Republican Party has been undermining rather than upholding essential democratic norms. *The Republican Evolution* is a timely analysis of a democracy in crisis, how America got there, and what needs to be done if the United States is to serve as inspiration rather than warning."

—Archie Brown, emeritus professor of politics, University of Oxford