

AMERICAN CONSTITUTIONALISM  
VOLUME II: RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES  
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Supplementary Material

Chapter 10: The Reagan Era – Foundations/Principles

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**Jerry Falwell and Richard Viguerie on the New Right<sup>1</sup>**

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*Jerry Falwell (1933–2007) and Richard Viguerie (1933–) were two central figures in the conservative movement that exercised considerable influence on national politics during the Reagan Era. Falwell was a prominent fundamentalist minister and cofounder of the Moral Majority. That organization organized conservative Christians to participate actively in both local and national politics. Viguerie was a prominent conservative journalist and strategist, with particular expertise in mobilizing previously politically quiescent religious conservatives. General agreement exists that his efforts played helped dramatically increase conservative political activism during the last part of the twentieth century.*

*As the excerpts below demonstrate, Falwell and Viguerie were both committed to promoting government support for religion and traditional family values. Compare these excerpts to previous conservative writings and to other excerpts exploring the constitutional vision of the Reagan administration Justice Department. How did religious conservatives in the Reagan Era differ from previous conservatives? What might explain the rise of this distinctive form of constitutional conservatism? What are the major points of agreement between religious conservatives and Reagan administration officials? Do you detect any important differences?*

*Jerry Falwell, "Introduction: The New Right: We're Ready to Lead"*

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Mr. Viguerie uses the term the "New Right" to speak of those moral citizens who now must be come together and let their voice be heard, those, as he puts it:

hard-working citizens sick and tired of high taxes and ever-rising inflation;

Small businessmen angry at excessive government regulation and federal red tape;

born-again Christians disturbed about sex on TV and in movies;

supporters of the right to life and against federal financing of abortions. . . .

Mr. Viguerie has . . . described the backbone of our country – those citizens who are pro-family, pro-moral, pro-life, and pro-American, who have integrity and believe in hard work, those who pledge allegiance to the flag and proudly sing our national anthem. He has described that group of citizens who love their country and are willing to sacrifice for her. America as built on faith in God, on integrity, and on hard work. . . .

It is now time for moral Americans to band together in a collective voice and make the difference in America by exerting an effort to make their feelings known. The godless minority of treacherous individuals who have been permitted to formulate national policy must now realize that they do not

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<sup>1</sup> Excerpts taken from Richard A. Viguerie, *The New Right: We're Ready to Lead* (Falls Church, VA: The Viguerie Company, 1980).

represent the majority. They must be made to see that moral Americans are a powerful group who will no longer permit them to destroy our country with their godless, liberal philosophies.

*Richard A. Viguerie, The New Right: We're Ready to Lead*

...  
... [A] conservative believes in six basic things: (1) a moral order, based on God; (2) the individual as the center of political and social action; (3) limited government; (4) a free as contrasted to a planned society; (5) the Constitution of the United States, as originally conceived by the Founding Fathers; and (6) the recognition of Communism as an unchanging enemy of the Free World.

...  
In social policy, we would:

- (1) Abolish the Department of Education, which seeks to displace both the local boards of education and parents as the final judge of our children's education.
- (2) Let the Equal Rights Amendment die a well-deserved death.
- (3) Approve a constitutional amendment protecting the Right to Life from the moment of conception.
- (4) Approve a constitutional amendment forbidding the use of busing for the purpose of desegregation—a move favored by the overwhelming majority of black and white parents.
- (5) End the use of quotas in employment.
- (6) ...
- (7) Free the FBI of liberal imposed regulations that prevent it from effectively protecting the domestic peace and internal law and order.

In moral policy, we would:

- (1) Restore prayer to the nation's public schools. ...
- (2) Keep the tax-exempt status of private schools.
- (3) Pressure the major TV networks and advertisers to eliminate the sexual and immoral programs which fill almost every hour of prime time Monday through Sunday.
- (4) Work for the protection of Sen. Paul Laxalt's Family Protection Act—legislation which is pro-family, pro-God and a reaffirmation of the traditions and morals on which this nation was built. [the bill denied federal funds to schools that did not allow prayer, forbade the use of federal funds to provide textbooks that challenged traditional gender roles, and forbade the use of federal funds for litigation of abortion and gay rights]
- (5) Wage an all-out war against pornography and immorality.