

Wrong Side of History

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Dear Editor,

Conservative principles have at times played a useful role in the evolution of our society but, when matters of national importance have been debated, our history as a nation is replete with instances in which conservative tradition has been on the wrong side of events.

As far back as our founding, conservative colonials belonging to the Whig Party fought against American independence. Fourscore years later, although the then progressive Republican Party of Lincoln generally supported the abolition of slavery, it was nonetheless opposed by many conservative Americans, especially in the South.

The uncanny knack of conservatives to being on the wrong side of history was later demonstrated by their fervent opposition to child labor laws, to workplace safety laws, and to laws granting women the right to vote. Furthermore, pitched battles were waged against the creation of Federal Deposit Insurance and Social Security. Later on, conservatives fought the establishment of Medicare, which today many of our senior citizens depend on for health insurance.

Conservatives also opposed civil rights and voting protections for minorities. They opposed prohibiting age and sex discrimination in the workplace. They opposed laws creating unemployment insurance, laws mandating food and drug safety, and even our environmental protections, not to mention now widely accepted regulations to reduce acid rain and limiting production of ozone destroying CFCs.

Next time a conservative tells you that health care reform or limiting carbon emissions will destroy this country, please take a moment and consider their track record in our progress as a nation.

John Donovan
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