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CONSERVATIVE VICTORIES

Are you a person who says a glass is half full or half empty? When you ask the score of a ball game, do you ask "who's winning?" or "who's losing?" The same facts exist in both examples, but your comment is all in your point of view.

Most news coverage of the presidential sweepstakes this year has treated them like a horse race and reported how many lengths ahead or behind the candidates are as they go round the bend of each state's primary.

The striking lesson of the Democratic primaries, however, is not what percentage point each candidate receives, but the fact that the overwhelming majority of Democratic voters are choosing one of the three candidates whom they perceive as conservative, namely, Carter, Jackson, or Wallace, as opposed to one of the candidates who are perceived as liberals, namely, Udall, Harris, Bayh, or Schriver•

.f:> The message was ceming through so loud and clear that Mo Udall an nounced he is eliminating the won1 • "liberal II from his vocabulary because it is hurtful to his image with the voters.

We've come a long way, haven't we, from 1960 when Barry Goldwater was the only candidate to proclaim proudly that he is a conservative, to 1976 when almost every candidate wants to be a conservative, and no candidate wants to be called a liberal.

Turning to the Republican presidential primaries, again we have a big contrast between how the same facts are perceived by different

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people. The conclusion to be drawn is not that Gerald Ford won a dozen victories over Ronald Reagan in half/primaries, but that an incumbent President is able to get only a little more than half the voters in his own party against a challenger who holds no office whatsoever and has none of the government money or jobs to dispense that are the stock in trade of 'i{bi te House patronage.

In 1968, Senator Eugene McCarthy challenged President Lyndon Johnson. in the New Hampshire primary. McCarthy lost with only 42 percent of the vote es against Johnson's 48 percent. But get this. McCarthy's name was on the ballot, while every one of the majority who voted for Lyndon Johnson bad to write in his name! -/tou just try running as a write-in candidate against a candidate whose name is printed on the ballot and you will quickly discover how difficult that is. You can almost count on one hand the number of elections to national office that have ever been won by a write-in candidate.

Yet, that primary was reported to the American public as a big defeat for Johnson, and he pulled out of the race soon after.

Today, Ronald Reagan has demonstrated far more support in the Republican Party than Eugene McCarthy ever had in the Democratic Party. Applying the same standards that were used to get Johnson to withdraw, **the narrow victories of incuntbent Fresid ht-Ford over challenger Ronald Reagan are surely no proof that Ford will be elected in Noveub1r.** An incumbent President must win big in the primaries to prove he is popular with the voters as well as the head of his party.

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