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COULD CARTER HAVE BEEN DE.FEATED?

As the Republicans pick up the pieces from the wreckage of the November second election, many must be asking themselves: would the result have been different if l:onald Reagan had been nominated·? An objective answer is probably yes. A look at the electoral college vote shows why.

Reagan could have carried all the same states that Ford carried including Illinois, the state where Reagan was born and went through school and college. A switch of Texas and Missouri from Carter to Reagan would have been enough to have given Reagan a majority in the electoral college, and both those states gave big primary victories to Reagan.

That does not even count the probability of Reagan's carrying certain states F'ord did not carry, including Florida, Louisiana, Ohio, Mississippi, and Tennessee. Reagan could have won even without counting on Richard Schweiker to carry Pennsylvania.

The election results in New Jersey, Connecticut, Ohio, and Illinois show that there was substantial defection from Carter by regular Democratic voters. It is likely that the abortion issue figured prominently in this loss of votes for Carter because he was perceived as pro-abortion.

In northern and eastern states, Reagan could have capitalized even more on this issue because he supports a Human Life Amendment, and his wife supports his views, whereas Betty **Ferd** is openly pro abortion and her husband's views are equivocal.

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The u.S; canal in Panama is another exaDtplfJ o:f bow 11eaga:n cotiJ.,1 have capitalized on issues. He turned it into a winning issue in the Texas primary by effective reference to it in his speeches. Polls show that at least 80 percent of our citizens favor keeping full U.S. ownership and control of the Canal and Zone we paid for. Because of the Kissinger commitments on Panama, Ford was precluded from making the Canal a vote-getting issue against Carter.

J'ost-election polls shows that the single reason moat oft u gtw.'.•n **, J,,,,r-'tt1 J.O** voted f!gainst Ford was that Irn pardonieid Hichrn-d Hixon. Th£::t9s n,".lt n ve:r,r go<.H:/. rea.son Jor voting for ,Jlti,my ,.;:u·t1:r1·,, but in a democracy each citizen is free to choose hiA own rea$on, t,iiu1d';her Jt ,.1,1 a good one ox not. In anyevent, Utlrnf;.fu1 wat:1 nof:. tarred wi that brush gn<l would not have lost those tbonAands of votes.

Reagan was not nominated because he fell victim to one of the immutable laws of the two-party system: officeholders always back the incumbent. Thus we witnessed the phenomenon that, although H£1ngan proved himBel:f moro popular vdth t;rssi root,s :Ho}ml:1:i.crn. vot1°•rr?, pr.qcttc1 JJy all Republ:l.can offict\hrildf'rf1i lin.::1d u1» t11tb l'r :rn:i.d{'mt Fo::rf'r.

You can count on one ban 11 the Senators, Con r Aemen, Fn0 Governors who backed Ronald Reagan. Reagan had to win his primary victories over such prestigious in-state opposition es senator Towe1 in Texas and Senator Hruska in Nebraska.

The overwhelming majority of Republican officeholders closed their eyes to the obvious fuct that Reagon bad many super or es8ets and none of Ford's bandicapR. It should hav taken no Ape i J 11ow@rs of perception to predict that the issues so hurtful to Ford, such as Nixon, Watergate, Washington, and Kissinger, were all non-issues against Reagan.

I wonder how those officeholders, many of whom were defea on Nov. 2, feel now when they reflect on what might have been if Reagon instead of Ford had f oed Carter in those all-importnnt telH-vision debates.

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