F!Se to **the NEWS**
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FORD'S **WARNING** TO REPUBLICANS

Former tfesident Gerald Ford sounded a weird warning when he announced that the Republican Party will lose its chance to recapture the presidency in 1980 if it follows the apparent conservative trend too far to the right. He added the dire prediction that "if the party goes down an extreme right path> it won't win."It is difficult to see how Gerald Ford could consider himself an authority on how to win the presidency, since he never did. To echo the famous words with which Senator Everett M. Dirksen put down Thomas E. Dewey at the 1952 Republican National Convention, "We followed you before and you led us down the road to defeat. "

In 1976 the Republican National Convention rejected the conservative path with Ronald Reagan and followed Gerald Ford down the middle of the road. The so-called moderates hardly have anything to crow about.

The recent primaries indicate that, contrary to Gerald Ford's crepe-hanging predictions, conservatism is the way to win. The Minnesota victory of Robert Short, who espoused conservative positions on tax cuts, spending cuts, abortion, gun control, and environmentalism, over heavily-favored liberal Representative Donald Fraser, was an upset of the first magnitude.

Likewise in Massachusetts, liberal Governor Michael Dukakis was ousted by conservative Edward J. King, even in a three-way race that should have given the incumbent an unbeatable advantage. King campaigned on Proposition 13, capital punishment, and tough sentences ·for crimi na1 s and drug pushers.

Senator George McGovern summed up the frightening impact on liberalism: "When two liberals go down in states like Massachusetts and Minnesota, it can't be ignored. You have to say the danger to liberalism is greater than it was."

The conservative trend has been accelerating from coast to coast ever since Proposition 13 carried in California by such a huge vote and on the same day

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conservative scholar Jeffery Bell upset the heavily-favored incumbent liberal Senator from New Jersey, Clifford P. Case.

Even George Gallup reports that the American electorate "leans heavily to a conservative point of view." Some 49 percent of voters perceive themselves as conservatives, while 39 percent say they are liberal. Ten percent are in the middle and 12 percent have no opinion.

The number of American voters who are willing to identify themselves as conservative is far and away greater than the number who accept the label Republican. If the Republicans are prospecting for votes, their most fertile hunting ground is among conservatives.

Gerald Ford's name is widely used in the mails to solicit contributions in order to defeat Democrats and elect Republicans. However, some of those funds are being used in the primaries to defeat conservative Republican candidates and renominate liberal Republican officeholders under the rule of politics that incumbents must support other incumbents.

After the disasterous Republican experience of backing the incumbent over a superior candidate in 1976, it is time for Republican voters to consider an alternative view of party primaries. They should be seen as the democracy of the party, where the rank and file can freely express their views on candidates, principles, and policies. Primaries are the arena where we find out if the incumbent still represents those who elected him and has sufficient support from his own people to win reelecti6n.

Some elections are dominated by personalities and others by issues. Any observer of the political scene must detect the groundswell today that is anti-big government, anti-big spending, and anti-big tax. Smart Republican candidates can ride the conservative wave into office. Before they pretend the conservative tide doesn't exist, they should remember the candidacy of Gerald Ford.

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