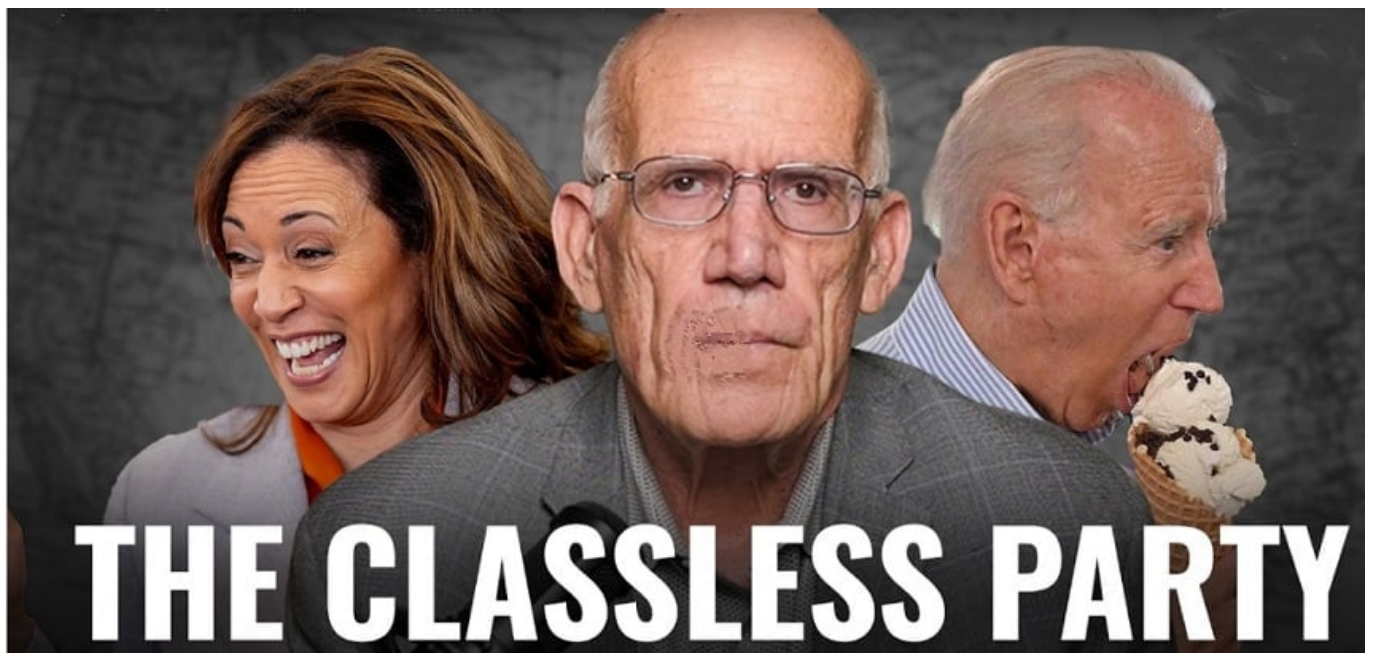


Democrats Are Addicted to Losing

By Victor Davis Hanson

After the defeat of Kamala Harris in November 2024, [the Democrats](#) recently decided to run an autopsy, a discovery, so to speak, of why they lost that election. These autopsies are not uncommon for the losing political party, but they only tend to work if you're honest and you try to analyze every considerable factor or criterion without censorship or without fear.

In the case of [the Democrats](#), though, there are certain elements of that campaign that were obviously wrong and contributed to their defeat.



So, we would expect the following: Why was Joe Biden nominated in the first place? He seemed to—after the South Carolina primary of 2020—be suddenly coronated. He had lost New Hampshire, he had lost Iowa.

And then the party bosses came in and said, “Pete Buttigieg, Elizabeth Warren, Bernie Sanders? These people are too

radical. We'll get old Joe Biden from Scranton, even though he's not alert."

And then when he was president, they kind of created a cabal that hid his dementia. And then when he was no longer useful and could not serve as a waxen effigy for a radical agenda under his name or his autopen, then they dumped him.

And yet, at that point, they should have had an open convention. But they didn't. They anointed Kamala Harris, who had been a candidate in 2020—a dismal candidate—and had not won one delegate. Her campaign, truncated though it was, was a dismal failure. I mean, she went through a billion dollars.

She really didn't have a message. She avoided the press. When she did try to speak extemporaneously, it was a word salad. And she was just an unimpressive candidate.

More importantly, though, they didn't have issues and policies that reflected their core values but would also appeal to the middle class.

Bill Clinton was a liberal, but he ran in '92 and '96 on a hundred new police officers; abortion should be legal, safe, but rare; school uniforms; juveniles who commit violent crimes should be punished accordingly; there should be a secure border; illegal immigration is wrong. And then he made a populist appeal to the middle class.

[The Democrats](#) are not going there. They don't want to talk about the middle class because their policies—open borders, the Green New Deal, critical race theory, critical legal theory, defund the police—all that has to be rejected because they're anathema to the middle class. They won't do it.

Look what happened in 2008 when John McCain lost to Barack Obama. He didn't do very well at all. He was a moderate Republican.

About 10,000 Republicans were unimpressed and stayed home, or

10,000–10 million independents, or whatever we want to call them.

But the point is, there were millions of voters who would've voted for a Republican candidate had he just appealed to the middle class. Instead, there wasn't much difference—if you look at their respective campaigns—between John McCain and Barack Obama.

And when John McCain lost, there was a Republican autopsy. And what did they find? Well, they picked Michael Steele for Republican National Committee chairman because he was black and he was a McCainite. But he wasn't the medicine for the cause of John McCain's defeat.

Remember what they also did? They started idolizing Barack Obama. David Frum, a Republican strategist, had a very infamous essay where he compared Barack Obama to what he said was a new head of the Republican Party, Rush Limbaugh. And he said, Rush is white, he's fat, he's had multiple marriages. He's not a good example.

That wasn't the point. The point was that Rush Limbaugh had some ideas—not all of them—that could be incorporated into a new Republican message. Close the border. Protect American citizens. Try to create a new policy that favors the middle class on matters of trade and tariffs. Avoid optional wars in the Middle East—on the ground, at least—that rely on the middle class that you have neglected during globalization to fight for you. Try to be fiscally responsible.

All those were core Republican values, and yet when you looked at that Republican autopsy of 2009, it was essentially: Try to out-identity politics the other side, or let in people from south of the border illegally. It was not a corrective.

Bottom line is, until the Democrats look in the mirror and say, "We have a message that nobody wants in the middle class. It's antithetical to the middle class on crime, on

immigration, on energy, on foreign policy, on the economy," they'll never change.

They're like addicts. They can't live with DEI, with the Green New Deal, with this utopian globalization, and they can't live without it.

First published in the [Daily Signal](#)