

The GOP at the SOTU: A Class Act, or Just a Frustrated One?



By Steven Yates

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I did not watch Biden's State of the Union (SOTU) speech. For starters, it was too late at night in my time zone (11 pm, two hours ahead of EST this time of the year). Surely it would start with some inane bromide like, "The state of our union is strong!" Everything to follow would gaslight its audience with denials that this is the most disastrous administration in a hundred years. I wanted to sleep afterwards instead of lie in bed, my blood boiling.

So I passed.

I also figured it would dominate news cycles for the next couple of days, and that accessing video clips of pivotal moments would be easy. Yep, Sleepy Joe slurred his way through efforts to claim that the worst inflation since the Carter years was "under control," despite prices of staples like eggs and meat now off the scales. How much was simply dodged, I don't know: homelessness rising because houses and rentals are becoming unaffordable, the crisis on the Southern border *he opened to every foreigner who wants in*, rising drug use – especially fentanyl coming in from across the border, escalating violent crime in (left-controlled) big cities, Wokery continuing to dominate education and the culture, the

highest credit card debt in history, and more.

From what I could gather, the SOTU stressed domestic issues. Bidenista foreign policy is an even bigger catastrophe, after all. It is dominated by a proxy war against Russia that [real experts tell us](#) could go nuclear if the Bidenista/NATO axis pushes the Kremlin far enough, e.g., if Zelenskyy stupidly fires U.S.-obtained missiles (at U.S. taxpayer expense) at targets clearly inside Russian Federation territory, or if he tries to reclaim Crimea which voted democratically to rejoin the Russian Federation in 2014.

And then there's the Chinese spy balloon that entered U.S. airspace unannounced, unnoticed until it was well inside Montana, allowed to continue on course for days: as if this White House and its Woke military were telling Xi Jinping and the Chinese Communist Party: "Our installations are open books! So go ahead! Spy on us!"

Biden calls for "unity" after repeatedly denouncing "MAGA Republicans" and accusing the GOP of trying to gut Social Security and Medicare.

Sometimes you laugh to keep from crying.

Around a third of *Democrats* do not want this octogenarian to run for reelection in 2024. That should be telling. If he ran and (miraculously!) lasted four more years, he'd be 86 when he left office! Everyone seems to be praying that Biden stays sufficiently healthy to keep up the front and can continue minimizing the word salad.

After all, if something happened to him, [Cackling Kamala](#), Biden's Woke VP chosen exclusively because of her race, sex, and leftist ideology, would become president!

No sane person wants *that*! That would be catastrophe to the *n*th power!

Corporate media stressed none of this, of course. Mainstream outlets fed us the visceral GOP reaction to Biden's lies of commission and omission. All as predictable as rain in Seattle.

A guy who often emails his disagreements with me from a center-left point of view sent me Charles Sykes' latest piece, probably representative of the Establishment Republican response to what happened the other night.

Sykes wrote a number of good books from 1988 to 2000. They had names like *ProfScam: Professors and the Demise of Higher Education* (1988), *A Nation of Victims: The Decay of American Character* (1993), and *Dumbing Down Our Kids: Why America's Children Feel Good About Themselves but Can't Read, Write, or Add* (1995).

Unfortunately, as happened with many "respectable conservatives," 9/11 seems to have thrown him for a loop. He backed the Iraq War on the evidence-free claims that Saddam Hussein was a *very bad guy* who had WMDs he could use against us at any time! Some of us considered that war a very bad idea (to say the least!), and thought we were staying a genuinely conservative course when we said so. Bush II, after all, was *not* a conservative. Like his old man, he was an arch-globalist.

Sykes's most recent book that I've seen is entitled *How the Right Lost Its Mind* (2018), a denunciation of Trumpism, "conspiracy theories," etc., suggesting that he never got the narrative collapse that gave us Trump in 2016 – especially the collapse of the idea that "globalization will make us all rich if we just give it time."

The article the gentleman whose initials are "R.B." sent me was entitled "[The GOP Keeps It Classy: SOTU 2023: Biden vs. the Trolls.](#)"

The first thing is that if this is representative of Sykes'

recent work, then he's slipped badly. The article is less his material and more an anthology of quotes and tweets from others. I know, I know, I've put in lengthy quotes a few times when another author said something not easily summarized – but Sykes' selection of quotes and snarky comments about the GOP response to the SOTU ("A Theater of Performative Jerkitude," he calls it) are as banally mainstream as he seems to have become.

A liberal could have compiled "The GOP Keeps It Classy."

Such material only reinforces my conviction that Establishment Republicanism collapsed, intellectually at least, along with its favorite narratives, between 2008 and 2016. Symptomatic of that collapse was Romney losing an election in 2012 he might have won had he not written off an entire population of voters.

So Marjorie Taylor Greene shouted "Bull****!" at one of Biden's more egregious lies, a kind of climax to the boos, chuckles, snorts, sarcastic asides, and other signs of the general lack of respect for the pitiful figure on stage.

It's simple, Mr. Sykes (and R.B. and other liberals).

To be respected, *you have to be respectable*. Biden simply isn't.

His approval ratings tick up from time to time but remain low overall. His notorious verbal *faux pas* are the target of jokes. He clearly does not have the respect of foreign leaders. As I've said previously, I do not think Putin would have sent troops into Ukraine had he perceived strength in this White House. Nor would the CCP be menacing Taiwan and sending spy balloons around the world.

Call this GOP a "Class Act" all you want. I think of what I saw of their reaction to this SOTU as *A Theater of Performative Frustration*: the frustration of those who have

tried to get truth to voters and been thwarted every step of the way while being called every name in the Woke-globalist playbook.

Go back to 2020. I know we're all tired of hearing about the jankiest election since the superelite of the 1900s engineered the Woodrow Wilson presidency to get their Federal Reserve.

But there it is, unresolved, like a long and very sharp thorn still digging into our sides, dissent silenced by epithets like *election denier*.

Tens of millions of Americans including several members of the present Congress do not consider this administration legitimate, and that's all there is to it.

Even if you disregard the early morning hour vote spikes many of us saw with our own eyes on web pages that were scrubbed from the Internet just days later, the Twitter Files indicate the illicit effort Big Tech made on behalf of Biden and against Trump, an effort involving rampant censorship and deplatforming. They used these same techniques against qualified doctors with medical degrees from Harvard and Stanford who criticized the covid lockdowns as dangerous. (We now have a generation of kids even further behind where they should be, education-wise, but that's another article.)

All this said, the GOP *does* have *major* challenges ahead, and we *have* to talk about them. They are independent of anything the Bidenistas do.

Start with the fact, for fact it is, that the factors that helped get Trump elected are still around. Globalism's proposed Great Reset and Wokery's white-bashing are as prevalent as ever, if not stronger than they were in 2016. Whites remain the only population that is actually losing ground in America and across the West. CBDCs, moreover, are on the horizon and might start being rolled out *this year!* They will effect every group without regard to race/ethnicity,

“gender pronoun choice,” etc.

Second: the Establishment will do whatever it has to, to block a second Trump term, even if Trump is the nominee in 2024. Should Trump *be* the nominee? According to a recent poll, he has 31 percent support, which means that 69 percent of Republicans prefer someone else at this point.

But does Trump *want* the nomination badly enough? Frankly, his performance since last November has not exactly set the world on fire. He remains fixated on 2020. Part of me doesn't blame him, but he's not putting forth any vision for the future, starting with what he wants his second term to accomplish. Instead, he's attacking Ron DeSantis who according to polls is his main, so-far-unannounced competitor, also attacking anyone he perceives as disloyal (e.g., Evangelicals who seem to be getting cold feet).

Small wonder the upper echelons of the GOP's [donor class](#) have launched their own narrative, which is that Trump is the only Republican who can't defeat Biden in 2024. Their fear: a large field of self-interested hopefuls – Nikki Haley, Mike Pompeo, Mike Pence, John Sununu, possibly Liz Cheney, others – could divide the anti-Trumpers and hand him the nomination.

Recall that roughly the same percentage of Democrats prefer someone else in Biden's place. They have potentially much stronger candidates. Should Gavin Newsom (e.g.) run and get the Party of Jacobinism nomination, this will make the GOP's job tougher.

We have time for Trump to get it together, even if at the moment it's not lookin' too good (as my late maternal grandmother would have put it).

My present thinking: if Republicans *blow it* in 2024 – or if 2024 is also stolen and not reversed in time – **they blow it for America**. If they *win* in 2024, e.g., with someone such as DeSantis who will carry the anti-Woke and hopefully the anti-

globalist torches, that person will have the same fight on his hands that Trump has had to contend with. There are no guarantees he will be able to do anything except slow the inevitable to a crawl while the rest of us strategize our alternatives.

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ANNOUNCING: an online course/tutorial entitled **The Philosophy of Responsible Freedom**, directed by Jack C. Carney with myself as chief partner: a Zoom-based intellectual encounter between an atheist (Carney) and a Christian (Yates) exploring the history of ideas using [Academy of Ideas](#) videos and supplementing them with the thoughts of others. Carney is an autodidact in areas ranging across psychology, psychiatry, and anthropology who emphasizes the importance of human relationships in a world where loss is omnipresent (he also teaches English online). I am an author and trained philosopher with a doctorate in the subject who taught philosophy courses in years past, walked away from academia, still writes philosophy emphasizing the need to identify, clarify, and evaluate the success (or failure) of worldviews in civilization, stages of civilization, the quest to build free societies, and how worldviews either enhance or hobble responsible freedom. Course/tutorial outline [here](#). For more information or to get on our email list: freeyourmindinsc@yahoo.com.

Steven Yates's latest book *What Should Philosophy Do? A Theory* (2021) is available [here](#) and [here](#). His earlier *Four Cardinal Errors: Reasons for the Decline of the American Republic* (2011) is available [here](#).

While admittedly the real world can be scary enough, he has also written a novel of cosmic horror. *The Shadow Over*

Sarnath will be published soon.

Our newsletter tentatively entitled *The Zeno Letter* is on the drawing board. It will offer content ranging across philosophy-for-living (as opposed to the idle academic discipline), survival strategies given the challenges to come, life and relationship advice, and more, with links to further content worth exploring and notes on recent important books in all these areas. The name will be explained in the launch issue, hopefully no later than the end of March, which will also launch a larger project on the drawing board. There are (believe it or not!) good things happening! The PDF of this and subsequent issues will be FREE to Patrons! To get on the email list, go [here](#) and sign up.