

For the GOP, 'Limited Government' Is for Voters, Not Donors

The Republican Party has long sung the refrain of limited government and free markets, reprimanding their constituents about the dangers of intervening in the economy. Big government and boycotts, they say, are for Democrats—we may not like what private companies do, but, hey, that's capitalism!

All of that, of course, is a lie, or at best a hypocritical half-truth. The GOP is happy to intervene in the economy to benefit its financial backers—while claiming principled objections to using government power to aid the voters who put them in power. Consider the following examples:

In July, *Axios* reported that more than a dozen GOP state treasurers had [threatened to withdraw assets](#) from large financial institutions if they agreed to decarbonize their lending and investment portfolios, which would harm the energy industry. Republicans promised to use the power of the purse to make banks feel the pain were they to reduce their lending to companies involved in fossil fuel development.

Yet the GOP threatened no such drastic action when BlackRock, the world's largest money manager, [used its financial muscles](#) to force retailers like Walmart, Dick's Sporting Goods, and Kroger to pull most or all guns and ammo off the shelves, effecting a kind of gun control outside the legislative process.

Republicans also kept their hands at their sides when Banks United [closed former President Donald Trump's account](#) for political reasons, and when Bank of America forwarded personal information of their constituents' transaction and account

information [to federal authorities after the Jan. 6 protest.](#)

The unwashed Middle Americans boycotted Bank of America as a result, but the GOP sat on the sidelines. Meanwhile, it has taken a hard line in the cold war against Ben & Jerry's. The ice cream maker recently [announced](#) it would be "inconsistent" with its values to sell its frozen wares in "the Occupied Palestinian Territory." However, Ben & Jerry's also noted it would "stay in Israel through a different arrangement," rather than cutting ties with the country altogether. Nevertheless, a platoon of Republicans swiftly launched a War on Ice Cream.

Republican Sen. James Lankford from Oklahoma was ready to jump [on the anti-Ben & Jerry's bandwagon](#) while Rep. Lee Zeldin from New York [blasted](#) the decision as "anti-Jewish discrimination." Texas State Comptroller Glenn Hegar [told](#) CNBC that his office is looking for ways to wage financial warfare on Ben & Jerry's under the Texas Government Code. In Pennsylvania, Republican State Rep. Aaron Kaufer [urged](#) the governor, attorney general, and treasurer to "end any affiliation or serving of Ben & Jerry's ice cream" in the state government, agencies, and affiliates.

What is remarkable about the Republican Party's assault on Ben & Jerry's due to its stance on Palestine is both its intensity and hypocrisy, given that the GOP was silent over the ice cream maker's even more incendiary stance on the new Juneteenth federal holiday. In June 2020, Ben & Jerry's libeled white people [in its Juneteenth statement](#), accusing them of poisoning the well of diversity in America. Although Republicans have made a stir about critical race theory, Ben & Jerry's statement—which actually now represents the critical race theory "party line" of most large corporations—provoked not a single pound of the GOP war drum.

Republicans would be far more justified in using financial and legal weapons to retaliate in this case than they would be in going to war against an ice cream company for making pro-

Palestine gestures. Indeed, the GOP is bellicose for all the wrong reasons.

Another example of such Republican hypocrisy was [revealed](#) by journalist Ryan Girdusky in *The American Conservative*: Congressional Republicans are planning to give President Joe Biden war powers to address growing unrest in Cuba. In other words, the GOP is willing to grant Biden even more power to bring “freedom” to Cuba while its own constituents imprisoned after the Jan. 6 protests rot in DC jails. Further, Republican leadership also hosted soirées with Amazon, Facebook, and Google about bringing Big Tech to Cuba. Girdusky’s scoop on the Stupid Party’s latest follows their months-long yelping of grievances about both the “[woke](#)” military and tech companies, while making no serious legislative attempt to change the policies of the Pentagon or Silicon Valley.

The Republican Party is not, and has never truly been, on the side of limited government. Rather, it has stiff-armed its voters with supposedly principled reprimands about the dangers of using government power, while gleefully pulling the levers to help itself and various interest groups, often ones whose aims are diametrically opposed to their supporters.

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