



## Can Republicans Talk?

The first time I saw Chris Christie on television, shortly after he became governor of New Jersey, my immediate reaction was, “My Gosh! A Talking Republican!” It was almost like seeing a talking giraffe or a talking salamander.

Technically speaking, Republicans do talk, but talking is definitely not their strong suit. Nor do they seem to have put a lot of thought into what they say or how they say it. The net result is that articulate Democrats can get away with the biggest lies, without any serious rebuttal from most Republicans.



I have not heard any Republican official or candidate even try to answer a standard claim of the Democrats, that “deregulation” is the reason the housing market went haywire and brought down the economy. Therefore, according to the Democrats, Republicans who want to restore a free market are just trying to “go back to the same policies that got us into this mess in the first place.”

That sounds very persuasive, if you don’t know the facts — and it sounds like pure hogwash if you do. But facts don’t speak for themselves. And if we wait for the Republicans to speak, the whole country can be in big trouble.

The “deregulation” gambit is not new. It was tried out years ago, in California, when some of the most heavy-handed regulation of the electrical utility companies forced them to charge less for electricity than they had to pay to buy it. After this led to their financial collapse, and then to power failures and blackouts that outraged the public, the Democrats’ response was that this was all due to — you guessed it — “deregulation.”

It is the same story today on the national level. Federal agencies with powers of economic life and death over banks and other lenders forced these lenders to lower their lending standards. The words of the regulators themselves are a matter of public record, and they sound like something out of *Alice in Wonderland*. They ought to be quoted, to give the lie to claims that “deregulation” is the reason for the housing boom and bust.

Some people think that nonsense is too silly to answer. But not answering it can just allow nonsense to prevail — to the detriment of the whole country.

Much as I admire the approach of Congressman Paul Ryan, I cringed during one of his speeches when he said — in just one sentence — that none of his reforms would deny benefits to people already getting Social Security. When the truth is just a passing blip on the screen and the lies go on at great length, guess which one is likely to prevail politically.

Vulnerable people, depending on that monthly Social Security check, need to hear that you understand that they paid into Social Security for years when they were working, and that it would be unconscionable to now cheat them out of what they paid for.



Written by [Thomas Sowell](#) on September 19, 2012

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Policy wonks already know that nobody in his right mind has proposed any such thing. But, if you depend on the votes of policy wonks to win elections, be prepared to lose in a landslide.

One of the biggest of the election year lies is that Republicans want to sacrifice the poor in order to have “tax cuts for the rich.” That would be grossly immoral — if it were true. Unscrambling the confusion in that argument can involve work. But if people on welfare can be expected to work, surely people running for high office can put in a little work too — including the work of explaining in plain words what is totally false about the “tax cuts for the rich” argument.

I know it can be done because I have done it. You can see my essay on the subject on my website ([www.tsowell.com](http://www.tsowell.com)) under the title “Tax Cuts.”

But so long as Republicans don’t seem to feel any urgency about refuting the Democrats’ claim that they just want to help the rich at the expense of the poor, they are courting defeat on election day. Why lose to a lie because you didn’t bother to explain the truth?

Some of the time that was spent at the Republican convention trying to “humanize” Mitt Romney could have been better spent debunking the Democrats’ talking points. After all, we are not going to be voting for a Buddy-in-Chief in the White House, but for someone with some clear ideas about what this country needs — and who is willing to share those ideas with us in plain English.

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