

MATTHEW HOY

MAY 28, 2016 9:16 PM

# California's Republican Party is broken, and Donald Trump won't fix it

## HIGHLIGHTS

San Luis Obispo County GOP Chairman Al Fonzi blames Obama for rise of Trump

Fonzi worries that Trump at top of ticket could hurt chances of down-ballot GOP candidates

Fonzi will still vote for Trump, because a Hillary Clinton presidency would be far worse



Matthew Hoy **David Middlecamp** - dmiddlecamp@thetribunenews.com



BY MATTHEW HOY



Al Fonzi has a tough job.



The retired lieutenant colonel and veteran of both the Navy and Army is the chairman of the [San Luis Obispo County Republican Party](#), and he knows the general election this November will likely be a difficult one for the GOP.



"California's Republican Party is broken," he told me recently over lunch at a restaurant near his Atascadero home.

A rather uncontroversial assessment considering that not a single statewide office is held by a Republican, and Democrats hold supermajorities in both houses of the Legislature.

Republicans haven't held the governor's mansion this century (both Fonzi and I agree, Arnold Schwarzenegger doesn't count) and it's unlikely there will be a conservative resurgence in the state anytime soon.

And that's mostly Republicans' fault.

"The Democratic Party is poison to the needs of working-class people," Fonzi said. Yet they continue to dominate the state. "That's our fault, because we haven't made that clear."

And nominating a wealthy, arrogant, narcissistic, short-fingered vulgarian to lead the party in 2016 isn't likely to help the conservative cause anywhere in the country.

Fonzi blames President Barack Obama for creating the political culture that produced Donald Trump.

"We ran into a president who said, 'My way or the highway,' " Fonzi said.

And "punish your enemies." And "If they bring a knife to the fight, we bring a gun."

Obama rammed through a restructuring of the nation's health insurance system without any Republican buy-in, and the result has been higher deductibles, higher premiums, less choice and insurers warning the "marketplace" is unsustainable.

Obama [joked about using the IRS to audit his enemies](#), then Lois Lerner and the IRS targeted conservative groups in the run-up to his re-election campaign to prevent them from raising money. She takes the Fifth before Congress, but Obama's "Justice" Department decides there was really no need for her to do that, because [she did absolutely nothing wrong](#).

After years of saying he couldn't extend amnesty to people living in the country illegally without Congress, he suddenly discovered he could. When sued by several states over his illegal amnesty, "Justice" Department lawyers were "intentionally deceptive" about what the government was doing, prompting a federal judge to order government lawyers to [take remedial ethics classes](#).

We shouldn't be surprised that the reaction on the right has been: "Well, two can play this game."

A Donald Trump presidency isn't Fonzi's first choice, but in his estimation it's immensely preferable to a Hillary Clinton presidency.

"Hillary Clinton is the most corrupt politician in my lifetime, and I include Richard Nixon," Fonzi said.

I told Fonzi I would have preferred if the Republican Party had nominated a Republican, rather than longtime Clinton buddy and contributor Trump.

That elicited a wry smile.

I worry that if Trump's elected, in his willingness to make a deal, he'll sell out the people who voted for him when he espoused conservative-ish positions in the primary.

"What he will do, I can't tell you," Fonzi said. "I hope he learns. I hope he's malleable. This isn't a business. When you make a bad decision, people die.

"I hope he's up to it."

And Fonzi worries that Republicans who loathe Trump will decide to stay home in the fall.

Republicans have a good chance to pick up the open congressional seat resulting from Lois Capps' retirement.

Republicans should also be able to hold onto the state Assembly seat currently held by Katcho Achadjian, who is term-limited out, not to mention several county supervisor races.

"The Republican Party still stands for what it says it does," Fonzi said. Limited government. Economic opportunity. Religious freedom. Pro-life. A strong national defense.

While Fonzi's argument that "to vote for a third party (for president) you're allowing evil to succeed" might carry some weight if we were in Ohio or Florida, it's pretty safe to say that in deep blue California my vote for president just doesn't matter.

Come November, I don't want any evil to succeed, so I won't vote for Hillary, or H.P. [Lovecraft's alien god Cthulhu](#). Instead, I'll probably end up writing in the [Sweet Meteor of Death](#), because if one thing is clear by now it's that global mass extinction is the best-case scenario.

After all, if our choices are Clinton or Trump, we can't say we haven't earned it.

*Conservative columnist Matthew Hoy is a former reporter, editor and page designer. His column appears in The Tribune every other Sunday, in rotation with liberal columnist Tom Fuls. Read Hoy's blog at Hoystory.com. Follow him on Twitter @Hoystory.*

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**Rodger Avalanchier** · Morro Bay, California

Quite a distorted view of reality. The CA GOP has been broken for years. First they nullify an election, place Arnold in office then disown their creation and blame "it" for the stupidity of "its" creators. So they blame gerrymandering, voters order independant redistricting -- and the GOP loses worse.

Then SLOCRP offers a string of crappy house candidates while funneling \$Millions to energy friendly unpopular hopefults in foreign districts. Astute political leadership Lieutenant Colonel.

Whats left but to blame Obama for gridlock and ignore McConnell's stated goal to stop all Obama legislation and nominations? Handing us Trump and blaming Obama for that, too.

A party of men too dishonest to accept responsibility for the nightmare they created and too dense to think no one noticed. "The Republican Party still stands for what it says it does," Fonzi said.

And what it does is nothing - R.A.

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**Jay Bonestell** · Artist at Bonestell Studios

So this Fonzi guy blames Obama for Trump. Got it. Just like the teabaggers blamed Obama for the 2008 recession which began before the scary biracial man with a foreign sounding name was inaugurated.Hell, I even heard that some of the nuttier repukes were blaming him for Katrina-- which happened in 2005.Trump happened because this society has been dumbing down for a long time, plus the fact that the radical right has been wallowing in anti-intellectualism, religious craziness,Koch brother's money & simple nihilism for a long time.

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**Gordon Fuglie** · Advisory Council - steering committee at Central California Museum of Art

May I assist Jim Bills in loading up his trailer and wave him off as he moves to Mississippi? Doing it yesterday would be great!

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**Russ Byler** · Upper Management at Calthouse

You just keep your head in the sand. At least from there you can't do any damage.

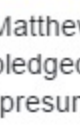
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**Jim Bills**

San Francisco death: Kate Steinle's family files lawsuit (The California Dream) dead and gone ... Keep the utopian dream going ... <http://www.cnn.com/.../us/kate-steinle-wrongful-death-suit/>

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**Jim Bills**

Actually I was thinking more like Belize ... #StopSanctuaryCities

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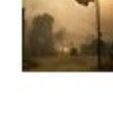


**David Ciaffardini**

Matthew Hoy, you make a lot of good points. What do you think about the fact that Katcho publicly pledged his support for Trump even before Trump achieved enough delegates to be the "presumptive" nominee for the party?

Many of us are VERY disappointed in Katcho and feel his support for that madman puts our nation in danger. I mean, what in heck is Katcho thinking? If Katcho can stoop that low, what else can we expect from him? Party loyalty is one thing, but party insanity where the welfare of the entire nation is put at risk for political expediency is something else.

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**Steve Felten**

Revising history works better if it isn't recent history. Trump's rise is more about the establishment GOP not accomplishing anything they promised the 2012 Tea Party agenda which brought in all the mid-term votes. The "free stuff" given to undocumented immigrants pales in comparison to the oil industry subsidies While they drill on public land without paying an extraction fee, and taxpayers are stuck remediating their environmental disasters.

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**Jim Bills**

Jerry Brown and his band of left wing clowns care more about illegal aliens than their real constituents. Now we have anarchy in the streets with illegals and their ilk waving Mexican flags and assaulting police and citizens as they try to exercise their freedom of speech and assembly. California is a welfare magnet for the poor and is the sole reason the Democrats get their votes. The bubble is ready to pop. They cannot afford to keep writing checks to their REAL CONSTITUENTS any longer. Middle class people like me are fleeing the state of HIGH TAXES and FREE STUFF. I am LONG GONE when I retire in a couple years. Selling both houses and moving as far away from Cali as I can. [http://www.scpri.org/.../will-brown-s-revised-budget-plan-...](http://www.scpri.org/.../will-brown-s-revised-budget-plan-.../)

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**David Ciaffardini**

I'm sorry if things aren't going well for you. Life in any of our 50 states can be tough. I hope you find the peace and success you are looking for.

However, if all the rude, extremist rightwing grass-is-greener complainers who say they are going to move from California would actually up and do it, that would be a boon for the rest of us who are loyal to one of the greatest states ever.

I mean MOVE ALREADY and have the courtesy not to insult all the people you leave behind (so when you, as so many do, crawl back, you will still have some friends here.)

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**Jim Bills**

David Ciaffardini I see by your FB page that you are just another worthless TROLL with nothing to add to a conversation except blather and inane psychobabble. BTW my friends are veterans like myself, not illegal alien invaders sucking the welfare state dry.

Like · Reply · May 30, 2016 11:55am



**David Hall**

Humble Servant at Asia Gospel Network

Is it broken because big Al tripped and fell onto the GOP? Talk about your armchair politician. And if you don't believe that the government has become a business I have to wonder from which planet you arrived here. Maybe it is near the star Kolob where God lives with His wife; according to the delusional Mitt Romney.

Like · Reply · 2 · May 29, 2016 1:22am



**Rodger Avalanchier** · Morro Bay, California

Business and materialism; I believe Mitt layed off American workers to pay for a transporter so Ann can beam her car between earth and Mitt's planet. Wonder if George (or Rulan) will be in nearby orbit.

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## ABOUT MATTHEW HOY



Matthew Hoy, a conservative, is a San Diego-area native and 1994 graduate of Cal Poly's journalism program. He spent 15 years at various newspapers along the West Coast, including The Lompoc Record, The Daily World in Aberdeen, Wash., The North County Times in Escondido and The San Diego Union-Tribune. For 15 years, Hoy has written a blog on politics and the media, Hoystory.com. Hoy's column will be published in The Tribune every other week, in rotation with liberal columnist Tom Fuls.

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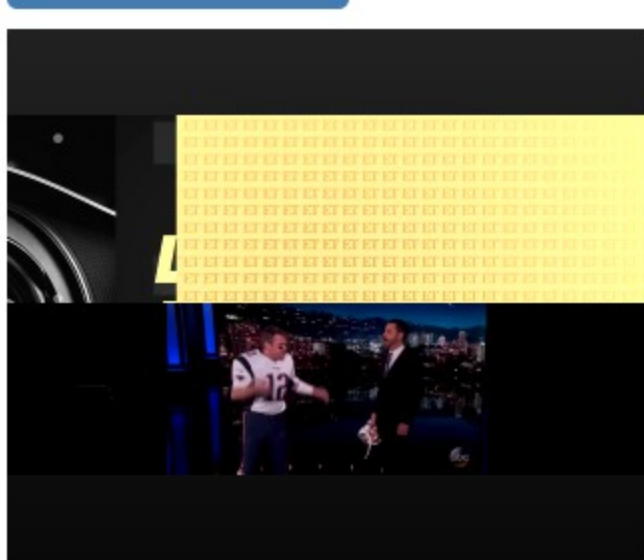
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