

# The Cape Cod Chronicle

## Fouhy: 'Big Blue Wall' May Block Republican Presidential Bid

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Richard Kraycir of the Chatham Marconi Maritime Center welcomes Beth Fouhy, senior editor for politics at NBC and MSNBC, at her talk last Thursday in the center's Ed Fouhy Distinguished Speaker Series. JOAN AUCOIN PHOTO

CHATHAM – The path to the election of Hillary Clinton as the next president will be much easier than that leading to a Trump presidency. The Republican Party continues to decline while the Democratic Party is growing. The two wildcards in the current political scene are the growing number of registered Independents and the Millennial voters who favor neither candidate. There is no indication of major changes that will improve the current political situation.

Beth Fouhy, senior political editor at NBC News and MSNBC, shared these summary comments with an audience that filled roughly three-quarters of the auditorium of the Monomoy Middle School Oct. 14, during a talk on

“Presidential Election 2016.” Sponsored by the Chatham Marconi Maritime Center, the talk was the second in its Ed Fouhy Distinguished Speaker Series, established in memory of her father.

Based primarily on the analysis of data prepared on Sept. 26, before the second presidential debate, more recent developments “and the current craziness” of the presidential campaign, and elaborated upon in a question and answer session following her talk, Fouhy walked the audience through a series of visual displays outlining the political scene during this presidential election year.

The base of the Republican Party, comprised mostly of white, older, married, rural, and religious persons of little or no college education, has been steadily declining from its peak during the Reagan years, according to Fouhy, while the Democratic base of non-white, young, single, unchurched, urban, and college educated, has increased to the point where there is now a “big blue wall” of 18 states and the District of Columbia that represents 242 electoral votes as opposed to the 13 “Red” Republican states that total only 106 electoral votes.

This dominance of “Blue” over “Red” states, combined with electoral votes from swing states, contributed to the victory of Barack Obama over Mitt Romney in 2012 – 332 to 206. Polls show the “big blue wall” is holding up in the current campaign, with Hillary Clinton leading Donald Trump in projected electoral votes 268 to 190, with 80 undecided in the so-called battleground states of Ohio, Iowa, Nevada, North Carolina, Florida, New Hampshire, and two Congressional Districts of Maine. Clinton will need to win only one of these states to reach the 270 needed to become the next president, while Trump must win them all, according to Fouhy.

Another perspective on the current presidential race is reflected in additional data Fouhy shared in her talk. Hillary Clinton has strong support from African Americans (81 percent to Trump’s 7 percent), women (51 to 37 percent), adults aged 18 to 34 (50 to 34 percent), and college graduates (49 to 43 percent). Trump has the support of men (46 to 44 percent for Clinton), whites (49 to 41 percent), and non-college (53 to 35 percent).

Trump’s challenge is to gain the Latino votes (predicted to foster the most lopsided presidential vote on record) and women, while Clinton faces a lack of support from potentially apathetic young voters and white men. A recent poll released by FiveThirtyEight, a trusted analysis of polls, indicated that were only men to vote, Trump would easily win, while if only women voted, Clinton’s lead would be overwhelming. In the end, Fouhy said, based on her analysis of the potential electoral vote, the path to the presidency will be much easier for Clinton than for Trump.

However, the speaker added, the challenge facing the Republican Party precedes the current Trump candidacy and will continue whoever wins the election in November. The Reagan coalition of international hawks and social, economic, and religious conservatives created 36 years ago has fallen apart, and the GOP needs to rebuild itself in a way that attracts Democrats as Reagan did, as well as independents who are registering in increasing numbers.

“Politics as usual no longer works,” Fouhy stated, but the prospects for change are not promising. State legislators redistrict their states in ways that foster the dominance of one party over the other. In one district in California both congressional candidates are Democrats. Further, most Democrats vote only in the presidential contest, while Republicans tend to cast ballots in every election. In addition, most voters choose familiar names in Congressional races, favoring incumbents. These factors, Fouhy said, help explain the legislative gridlock in Washington.

In addition, Independents often vote for the candidates of one of the traditional political parties rather than forming a new political movement. It is not clear whether the young voters who supported Bernie Sanders candidacy will vote for Clinton or sit out this election.

Many of those attending the talk were older voters; their questions reflected confusion or worse over the current presidential campaign, and worry about the survival of the Republican Party. Whoever wins the election on Nov. 8, the future direction of the political and governing process of this country remains uncertain.