

## A Kansan's Breakup Letter to the GOP

October 2017

Dear GOP,

This is hard to write but I think we shouldn't hang out together anymore. I'd like to say it's not you, it's me. But I kind of think it is you. I know that's harsh but you've changed and I just feel we're going in different directions.

I can't think this is a big surprise. You actually asked me to move out when I rudely ran against your BFF Kris Kobach in the Republican primary. He issued a press release saying I wasn't a "real" Republican so I should leave the party. You didn't exactly stand up for me.

Now you're on a bender with some billionaire named Donald. I mean, he's what you're looking for? What part of your beloved values do you find in that guy? How am I supposed to compete with that? I'm not even sure what "that" is.

So I'm not sure you're sad that I'm leaving but I hope you some day realize that we weren't a bad couple. You kept me from going too far into poorly thought out progressive proposals and I'd like to think I kept you from going too deep into your darker, unforgiving side. Like every good couple, we were better together than we were separate. Sadly, that's no longer true.

Now, instead of you helping me stay realistic and effective you make me say stuff that I don't believe and make me act happy when you are doing really mean things. You are not making me better but instead making me feel hollow inside. Life's too short for that.

I know some of my fellow moderates are staying in this abusive relationship with you. They think they can change you, make you decent again. They think you will start treating them with respect again if they give you just one more chance. I hate telling them this, but that is not going to happen. You never really liked or respected them and that's not going to change. Now you are too strong in the low-turnout primaries for moderates to have anything but fleeting small victories. The relationship is toxic and it is over.

Honestly it's been kind of liberating since I decided to break up. I'm going to try living on my own for a while. A group of us are starting a self-help group called Party of the Center where we can hang out with people with different views but still manage to get along to move the state along. It's less about ideology and more about actually getting stuff done.

How have things changed between us? Our party used to welcome people from conservative to liberal all under a banner of limited government and fiscal responsibility. Even you say that party doesn't exist anymore. It is now only some twisted version of conservatism that seems to hate government and anyone who is different.

I'm finding a lot of people from the Democratic Party who also are feeling lost and in are search of a better relationship. Their party used to welcome people from conservative to liberal under a banner of

fairness for the “little guy” and trying to give a helping hand to those down on their luck. It is becoming more of some twisted version of liberal built around promising everything, taxing everything, and standing for nothing.

Turns out there are also a lot of independents who gave up on either party a long time ago. Both of you dumped us for flashier and hotter ideological zealots on the fringe. You both also seem to really like ridiculously rich people who throw their money around to make you feel special. Those of us left in the middle are wondering what happened to our relationships. You want our votes but you don't want us in your parties. So we have decided enough of this weirdness, we're going to “Partify the Middle.”

I know our new party makes you laugh to the extent you notice it at all. I've heard you say “good riddance” to others who have left so I don't think you will exactly be heartbroken. You know you still control one of only two real ballot options for the general election so you are sure you will be large and in charge. The thing about people on top is they rarely understand what they are standing on. That ballot access is a very precarious perch.

GOP, late some night you are going to be lying in bed and a flash of doubt will cross your mind (always happens in a breakup). You might start wondering if it's good for a party to repel people instead of attract them. You may be winning now but that is only because people must choose between two false choices. Your house is a house of cards. When you start pining for those who left, you can't look at our yearbook because I took it but you can check us out online at [www.PartyOfTheCenter.org](http://www.PartyOfTheCenter.org).

When our new Party of the Center gets its 18,000 signatures, Kansans will have a new choice on the ballot of reasonable candidates who support, in Dwight Eisenhower's words, “a program of progressive moderation, liberal in its human concerns, conservative in its economic proposals.” In short, a group not in the gutters on the left and right but walking down the broad middle.

No, it's not for everybody. A lot of folks seem to like yelling at each other from the fringes and not getting anything done. But most folks really do like reasonable and efficient government making our communities better and stronger.

Scott

P.S. You can keep our Pat Boone album collection. That's more you than me anyway.

*Scott Morgan is a fifth generation Kansan whose family has been Republican since it first settled here in 1856. He served on the staffs of Senator Nancy Kassebaum, Senator Bob Dole, and Governor Mike Hayden. He was a Republican nominee for U.S. Congress in 1990 and the Kansas State Senate in 2008. He also served two terms on the Lawrence School Board. Scott ran against Kris Kobach in the 2014 Republican primary for Secretary of State.*